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BUSINESS



Russia's military advance into Ukraine rattles global markets.

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FOCUS



Putin knows there is little the West can do to get him to back off from Crimea.

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LIFE & STYLE



Ellen DeGeneres' selfie is a landmark social media moment.

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Saipan closer to casino gaming

» **Bill now heads to governor**
» **At least \$31M needed within 15 days after being signed into law**

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

After years of rejecting at least four casino measures from the House of Representatives, the Senate passed last night by a 5-4 vote a bill allowing casino gaming on Saipan. The bill is now on its way to Gov. Eloy S. Inos, who has supported casino legislation and other new sources of revenue amid 25-percent pension cuts, annual payments into a retirement settlement trust fund and spikes in health insurance premiums, among other things.

The Senate's surprising nod—which was unthinkable in past years—came only a day after the House passed it.

Senators passed the casino bill on first and final reading at 6:08pm without amendment and despite some senators'

plea to hold off action on it until members have fully reviewed the legislation.

Discussion on the bill took only a little over an hour starting at 4:51pm and inclusive of four-minute break before voting.

Those who voted against House Bill 18-179, House Draft 4 said the bill is "tailored" for a specific investor who will become an exclusive Saipan casino license holder for 40 years and who is supposed to cough up at least \$31 million within 15 days of the bill's enactment into law.

The four who voted "no" were Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian), Sen. Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota), Senate floor leader

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'POB a pie in the sky'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

An investment expert has cautioned the Legislature against floating pension obligation bonds to address the immediate funding needs of the CNMI government, describing it as a "pie in the sky."

Wilshire Associates principal Maggie W. Ralbovsky, CFA, made this clear to members of the Legislature in a letter on Monday, analyzing the im-

pact if the Commonwealth pursues its plan to float a bond to raise the money needed to pay its millions of dollars in obligation to the Settlement Fund.

Ralbovsky believes that issuing the POB to fund the government's annual payments to the Settlement Fund is not a feasible solution, as what many believe.

"Even if such bonds can be issued, the cost of the bonds would far outpace the investment returns that could

See POB on Page 4



LENTEN PREPARATIONS

Volunteers help secure in place a giant cross in front of Mt. Carmel Cathedral in preparation for Lent, the Catholic Church's most solemn season. This year, Lent runs from today, Ash Wednesday, to Easter Sunday in April.

LJ CASTRO

AS UKRAINE-RUSSIA TENSION ESCALATES

CNMI braces for possible impact on US visa waiver for Russian tourists

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

While thousands of miles away from Ukraine's volatile Crimea region where tension with Russia continues to escalate, the CNMI could see a fallout if the

United States imposes economic and travel restrictions against Russia that may include a stop to a lucrative U.S. visa waiver program for CNMI-bound Russian tourists. The Inos administration, along with the Marianas Visitors Authority, said yesterday they are "close-

ly monitoring this development."

At stake is the CNMI's estimated \$130 million annual economic revenue from Russian tourists if the U.S. imposes travel restrictions against Russia.

MVA managing director Perry Tenorio said yesterday that flights from East Rus-

sia to the CNMI "continue as scheduled" and that arrivals from Russia to the Commonwealth "remain extremely strong."

The CNMI's tourism agency, nevertheless, is "monitoring the evolving crisis in the Ukraine with great concern."

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Federal jury finds Falig not guilty. PAGE 3
Inos refers Fitial extradition resolution to OAG. PAGE 3

Local

\$75K wage hike for PSS leadership team, legal counsels OK'd

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

The Public School System's leadership team and its lawyers will get an across-the-board salary hike amounting to \$75,000 per annum starting in fiscal year 2015. That is, if the Legislature approves the \$40-million budget it wants for fiscal year 2015.

The Board of Education made this decision during yesterday's board meeting, when they approved the \$40-million budget request for the new fiscal year.

PSS consultant Ed Tenorio said the wage increase will cost the system about half a million dollars.

The budget amount is similar to the funding level PSS asked for in previous fiscal years. Those budget requests have consistently been slashed by the Legislature.

The proposed amount reflects a \$6.9-million increase from the \$33 million it is currently receiving for fiscal year 2014.

Tenorio said the higher budget plan will give PSS the ability not only to provide wages to its employees but will also restore 117 positions that are currently not funded. PSS wants to restore 50 classroom teachers, 12 school counselors, and a number of support staff.

Tenorio said the budget pro-

posal also includes wage adjustments for employees who did not receive any salary increases last year. It will be recalled that the wages of "low-entry level" employees—including trades and maintenance and other support staff—were adjusted all the way up to \$25,000 last year.

According to BOE chair Herman T. Guerrero, the salary adjustment for key PSS employees is necessary in order to retain these personnel.

The move to implement a higher salary level, he said, will make PSS "competitive" with other government agencies.

"Being the largest government agency in the Com-

monwealth, PSS needs to be competitive in terms of salary. We lost good people to other agencies because our salaries are much lower," Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* after emerging from a more than two-hour executive session yesterday.

When asked if the salary increases will be enforced even if the \$40-million budget is not realized in fiscal year 2015, Guerrero said that this is tied with the budget to be approved by the Legislature for PSS.

"It's subject for appropriation...and if it's not given to us, we will need to figure out [ways to do it]," he said, adding that because it's an election year,

perhaps politicians would be more receptive to PSS' request this year.

Guerrero, however, emphasized that "you cannot implement something if you don't have funds." This means that everything is contingent on the fiscal 2015 budget.

Saipan Tribune learned that if the \$75,000 salary adjustment is implemented, the key management team members who will benefit are the associate commissioners, finance director, human resource director, federal programs officer, and two legal counsels.

Loss of personnel

According to Guerrero, PSS used to employ more than a thousand employees, including federally funded positions.

Tenorio said yesterday that PSS currently has 832 FTEs, which is why PSS wants 117 positions restored.

Under the proposed \$40-million budget, \$31.63 million or about 79 percent is allocated for personnel cost. This is 12 percent higher than the current personnel budget of \$28.2 million.

The proposed budget for utilities is \$3.87 million, higher than the current budget of \$2.3 million. Tenorio disclosed that \$2.8 million is allocated for util-

See **WAGE** on Page 4

Quichocho denies raping Kim next to sleeping daughter

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Attorney Ramon K. Quichocho denied raping Jung Ja Kim on the floor of his apartment unit while his daughter was sleeping on the bed in December 2008.

In the continuation of his testimony in federal court yesterday, Quichocho also pointed to his wife, Frances, as actually the person who exchanged numerous chats and text messages with Kim by using his password in his email account and cell phone.

When *Saipan Tribune* left the courtroom late afternoon yesterday, Kim's other counsel, Colin Thompson, was questioning Quichocho.

Attorney Michael Dotts, counsel for Quichocho and his

wife Frances, stated that during her recent testimony Kim alleged that Quichocho raped her while she was resting on the floor a few feet away from the bed where his daughter was sleeping on Dec. 10, 2008.

"That's not true," Quichocho replied.

Quichocho also denied Kim's allegations that she had sex with him at a beach in Kagman on Dec. 12 or 13, 2008.

The lawyer said on Dec. 12, 2008, he and Kim and his other daughter watched a mixed martial arts fight at the Saipan World Resort in Susupe.

Dotts played a brief video of the Trench Warz IX The Annihilation at World Resort on Dec. 12, 2008, in which Quichocho identified himself, Kim, and his

daughter in the video.

Quichocho also denied Kim's allegations that she had consensual sex with him in the parking lot of Aquarius Beach Tower Hotel in Chalan Kanoa on Dec. 30, 2008.

Quichocho recounted that he and his wife, Frances, picked up Kim at the airport and dropped her off at her unit at Aquarius Hotel, then they went home.

After showing several pictures of the parking lot, Dotts asked Quichocho if he had sex with Kim in the parking lot of the hotel, which the lawyer denied.

He said Frances formed Latte Stone company in October or November 2008 and that it was that period when they began to have problems and friction in their lives.

Quichocho said Kim would actually tell him that Frances does not love him anymore and that she [Frances] was going to divorce him.

He said his marital problem worsened to the point where they were not speaking anymore in the latter part of December 2008. In January 2008 it got so bad that he told himself he would divorce Frances.

Sometime in February 2008, Quichocho said, he and Frances agreed to go on vacation in the Philippines as a means to fix their problem. He said it was actually a successful reconciliation trip with Frances.

"I realized I still love my wife. It's a healing process," Quichocho said.

Quichocho said it was in the

Philippines when they talked about the cause of their problems, where he learned that Kim was the source of their tension.

Quichocho said that Frances revealed to him that she and Kim went for a trip in Las Vegas. In that trip, Kim allegedly told Frances to leave Quichocho and that Kim was going to help her put up her own business so she would be financially independent. Kim was also allegedly encouraging Frances not to trust Quichocho and to divorce him.

Quichocho said that Frances also revealed to him that she was the one who was actually chatting with Kim. Quichocho said that Frances knew his password to his email account and his phone. He said he was not the one sending sexually explicit messages to Kim.

"I was angry. I was disappointed. Of course I was sad. I always treated Ms. Kim as a sister," he said, referring to his alleged discovery that it was Kim who created the animosity. "She tried to break us up."

Quichocho denied Kim's testimony that the three of them had a threesome twice.

He said that when they came back from the Manila trip, Kim already moved her things from a room in his office back to the first floor of the building. He said some items in Kim's office were taken, including Tan Dingo LLC documents.

Quichocho said he met Kim at Café at the Park in Garapan on Feb. 24 or 25 in 2009, where he told her they're not friends and family anymore because of what he discovered. He told her to hire a new lawyer. He said the meeting was short because it was tense. Quichocho said he told Kim that he had learned that she wanted to sleep with his wife.

The following day after that meeting, he went to Rota and met with Latte Stone employees and told them that Frances and Kim had ended their business relationship. He denied telling one employee to call the police if Kim or Kim's employees would come to Latte Stone Poker. He also denied firing that employee.

Quichocho said Kim would later harass them by cutting the water supply to the law office and apartment unit. He said Kim's employee also put a camera on the second floor to monitor them.

He said he also considered filing a lawsuit against Kim over the tenancy problem, but he withheld it after Kim's new counsel, Robert Torres, told him he would fix the matter.

He said they decided to move their office and apartment from Kim's building to Gualo Rai in September 2009.

He said on Dec. 18, 2009, Kim sued him so he also filed counterclaims for attorney's fees, conversion, and fraud.

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Jury finds Falig not guilty

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

A federal court jury acquitted former Corrections officer Mariano Q. Falig Jr. yesterday of charges that he distributed methamphetamine or "ice" on Saipan.

After deliberating for a day and a half, the 12 jurors unanimously found the 35-year-old Falig not guilty of conspiracy to distribute "ice" and distribution of "ice."

Falig's wife was already crying in court even before a court staff read the verdict. Family members

and relatives clapped upon hearing the not-guilty verdict.

Falig told the media that he believes justice was done.

"My lawyer did a good job," said Falig as he and his counsel, Bruce Berline, wife, family members, and relatives emerged from the courtroom yesterday afternoon.

Berline said they are very pleased with the jury and their decision. "They're outstanding jury. You could tell that they're attentive throughout the process," Berline said.

The defense lawyer said it took the jurors a day and a half to consider all the evidence.

"And we know that they took their time and were thorough with their job and came up with the right and just verdict," Berline said.

Assistant U.S. attorney Ross Naughton refused to comment after the verdict. Assistant U.S. attorney Garth Backe assisted him in the retrial of Falig.

An indictment charged Falig and his second cousin, Vicente Aldan Sablan, also known as Ben Seven, with conspiracy to distribute "ice" and distribution of "ice."

In addition, Falig was charged with using, carrying, or possession of a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime. The U.S. government later dismissed this count.

Sablan signed a plea deal with the U.S. government. He testified on Thursday for the U.S. government.

According to DEA Task Force officer Diwain A. Stephen in his report, their confidential source gave Sablan \$800 in ATF funds (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives) for a controlled purchase of "ice" from Falig on March 22, 2011.

Sablan testified that Falig called him that there's big amount of money to purchase "ice." Sablan said their neighbor (a confidential source) arrived

at Falig's house in Tanapag and handed him \$700 to buy "ice."

Sablan said he and his other cousin, Robin Sablan, proceeded to Lower Navy Hill where they purchased "ice" from a supplier.

In March 2013, Manglo-na declared a mistrial after Falig's then counsel, Ramon K. Quichocho, disclosed shortly after jury selection that he represents the prosecution's key witness in a family court proceeding.

The retrial of Falig began last Feb. 24.

Inos refers Fitial extradition resolution to the OAG

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Gov. Eloy S. Inos has referred to the Office of the Attorney General a newly adopted House resolution requesting the governor to take the necessary steps to extradite former governor Benigno R. Fitial to face the criminal charges filed against him, press secretary Angel Demapan said yesterday.

"Governor Inos has referred the resolution to the Office of the Attorney General for legal advisement and recommended action," Demapan said, when sought for comment.

The House adopted Resolution 18-56 on Monday by a vote of 13-3 with one abstention and three absences.

The resolution is "respectfully requesting" Inos to take the necessary steps for Fitial's extradition. It is authored by acting speaker Frank Dela Cruz (Ind-Saipan), along with six co-sponsors.

Inos, while he was still in Washington, D.C. last week,

JKPL catalogues 436 new books

The Joeten Kiyu Public Library has catalogued 436 new collections in January and February, ranging from juveniles and young adults to adults.

Recommended books include *To the Nines*, *The Conspiracy Club*, *Babe: The Gallant Pig*, *Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu*, *X-Men: Deadly Genesis*, *The New Avengers Vol. I*, and *Superior Spider-Man team-up*. Featured novels

said international extradition is a function of the federal government and not the local government. Fitial is believed to be in the Philippines where his wife hails from.

But Dela Cruz asked whether Inos' statement means he will not do anything to bring Fitial back.

The House adoption of the resolution comes a few weeks after Fitial's former attorney general Edward Buckingham was convicted and sentenced on charges similar to those that Fitial faces.

Only Fitial remains unserved with an arrest warrant in connection with the alleged conspiracy case, among other things. Police and ports police officers that allegedly were only following Fitial's orders had already been served with arrest warrant.

Fitial stepped down on Feb. 20, 2013, just before the start of his impeachment trial at the Senate to determine whether he should be removed from office. The House impeached him on 18 charges of corruption, felony, and neglect of duty.

include *You've been Warned*, *Blood Orchid*, *Crisis*, *The Seven Treasure Hunts*, *Leprechauns Don't Play Basketball*, *The First Phone Call from Heaven*, and *Great People of the 20th Century*.

The new collection of books will not only be appreciated by regular library goers but also by those who have not visited the library in a while. (*Jayson Camacho*)



FLU SHOT

A Division of Public Health Immunization Clinic staff gives a flu vaccine shot to Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro at the Hillblom Memorial Library on Feb. 20, 2014. Judiciary staff and the public availed of the free flu shots.

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PSS taps Benavente as legislative consultant

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

Former lieutenant governor Diego Benavente has joined the Public School System as the agency's legislative consultant.

State Board of Education chair Herman T. Guerrero confirmed Benavente's appoint-

ment yesterday during a board meeting.

Benavente, who is also a former lawmaker, was hired through a special contract, the amount of which was not disclosed.

"He is a retired individual and therefore cannot be hired as an employee so it has to be through an independent or

special contract," Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that he is not privy to all the contract's details.

Guerrero earlier said the legislative consultant—a newly created position—is directly under the office of Education Commissioner Dr. Rita A. Sablan.

Saipan Tribune tried to interview Sablan yesterday but she was in a hurry for another meeting after emerging from the whole-day board meeting that ended past 5pm yesterday. As legislative con-



Benavente

sultant for PSS, Benavente's primary responsibility is to assist the system and the board in working with the Legislature on matters that affect public schools.

Guerrero earlier told *Saipan Tribune* that the decision to tap the services of legislative consultant for public schools is to ensure that PSS' concerns on specific legislation and other related matters are properly conveyed to lawmakers.

"We need to figure out how we can talk more on one-to-one basis with our lawmakers to get something moved and accomplished within the Legislature. And that's basi-

cally the task we're expecting from the consultant," Guerrero had said.

The board has a separate committee on legislative matters, chaired by board vice chair Lucy Blanco-Maratita. According to Guerrero, the hiring of a legislative consultant will not conflict with the work of this panel.

He reiterated this yesterday, saying there are so many things to do both at the board level and PSS and both need help.

PSS has also filled another position. Guerrero said that Tiberius Mocanu was hired as legal counsel for both PSS and the board and will assist current counsel, Adam Hardwicke. The new lawyer worked in government prior to joining PSS in January.

IMPACT

From Page 1

"Given rapidly changing circumstances, the MVA does not plan a statement at this time," Tenorio said. "No message to Russian partners will be disseminated by the MVA until U.S. government policy has been established."

He added that Asiana and AVIACHARTER flights from East Russia to the CNMI continue as scheduled.

Russian tourists are allowed entry to the CNMI and Guam without securing U.S. visas, as part of the visa-waiver program.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), in a statement, said the CNMI depends on tourism from Russia "and cannot afford a disruption in that trade."

"We all have an interest in the peaceful resolution of this conflict," he said.

Press secretary Angel Demapan said the CNMI is hopeful that there will be no disruption

to the tourism industry.

"Any attempt to discontinue the travel of Russian tourists into the CNMI and other parts of the U.S. would not serve as a penalty to Russia more than it would be a loss in economic development to the CNMI and other part of the U.S.," he said.

Demapan said it is "prematuring at this point" to reach out to federal agencies "given that the U.S. government has not formally decided on what types of sanctions it plans to impose." But the CNMI hopes it won't come to that.

Sablan said "the prayers of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands are with the people of the Ukraine today, as that nation faces a profound political and military crisis."

"We support the actions of our President to assure that all standards of international conduct are maintained and that the rights of the people of the Ukraine to govern themselves are not undermined. And we urge all parties to refrain from the use of force and violence,

but instead to settle their disputes through diplomacy and negotiation," Sablan said.

U.S. President Barack Obama said Monday that the United States is examining a series of economic and diplomatic steps to "isolate Russia." He also called on Congress to work with his administration on an economic aid package for Ukraine.

The U.S. and many European countries are demanding that Russia scale back its deployment of troops in Ukraine's southern region of Crimea. But Russian President Vladimir Putin so far appears unfazed by the pressure.

Rep. Ralph Yumul (Ind-Saipan), chairman of the House Tourism Committee, said the CNMI "is at the mercy of the United States" when it comes to matters like the Ukraine-Russia tension.

"It's totally out of our control if the U.S. decides to shut the door on Russians," Yumul said in an interview.

He said the CNMI economy will be negatively impacted

when that time comes. Yumul said Russian tourist spending is double that of Japanese and Korean tourists to the CNMI.

MVA's Tenorio earlier said that although Russians accounted for only about 3 percent of visitor arrivals in fiscal year 2013, the economic impact of the market comprises approximately 12.45 percent of overall tourism revenue.

He said in fiscal year 2013 alone, Russian visitors were estimated to have generated approximately \$133 million in economic activity in the CNMI.

The escalating tension between Ukraine and Russia comes only weeks after MVA opened a promotional office in Russia to provide greater exposure in that country about the CNMI as a tourist destination.

MVA said an offshore office is now functioning in Vladivostok, Russia, with two full-time public relations and marketing managers in place. The CNMI now has four official promotional offices: in Japan, Korea, China, and Russia.

CASINO

From Page 1

Ray Yumul (Ind-Saipan), and Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota).

The five who voted "yes" were Sen. Frank Borja (Ind-Tinian), Sen. Joaquin Borja (Ind-Tinian), Senate vice president Victor Hocog (R-Rota), Sen. Pete Reyes (Ind-Saipan), and Senate President Ralph Torres (R-Saipan).

Before casting his vote, Sen. Frank Borja said, "for the economy and the CNMI and for retirees, yes." Sen. Joaquin Borja echoed the sentiment.

Taimanao, for her part, said there are other ways to generate revenue before voting.

Torres, during the session, said he has not supported casino gaming on Saipan since 2007 because it's been rejected twice by Saipan voters, among other things.

"However, times have changed," Torres told his colleagues, enumerating the government's challenges including the decision to defer retirees' 25-percent pension and annual payment into the retirement settlement trust fund as a result of the Betty Johnson lawsuit.

Torres, who became Inos' 2014 gubernatorial running mate in September last year, said were it not for the settlement deal, the pension system would have been bankrupt by March 14 this year.

"That's not an opinion; that's a fact," he added.

Reyes, during debate on the bill, said he would rather try and see whether an investor comes forward and pumps in millions into the government coffers and local economy within 15 days of the bill's signing rather than not take any chance at all.

The bill requires a minimum investment of \$2 billion in the CNMI, inclusive of the casino itself and building a new hotel with at least 2,000 rooms.

Senators asked the legal counsel, Joe Bermudes, whether passing the bill would affect the existing Rota and Tinian gaming laws. Bermudes said "no."

Taimanao said action on the bill seemed "rushed," because senators just received the over 30-page bill yesterday morning. She asked that senators be given more time to fully review the bill.

Assuming the bill is passed, Manglona said that within 15 days of its signing into law, a nonrefundable \$1 million application fee has to be paid and \$30 million in two-year advance annual fee, which he described as "very clear cut requirements." He said this also led him to believe the bill is tailored for a specific investor, which he said had been done before such as for golf and hotel investors.

But Manglona said if any investor is serious in investing in a casino, that investor should come forward now rather than

later when the bill is already passed and signed, only to be amended later.

He also pointed to a provision that gives millions to Rota and Tinian but only after retirees' needs are satisfied.

"Let's not mislead each other that this \$2 million will go to Rota [and \$2 million to Tinian]," he said, adding that he'd rather see all the money goes to retirees.

Hocog also posed the question whether Saipan casino won't be allowed anymore if after 15 days of the bill's signing, no investor comes forward and pay the required amount.

House floor leader Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan), main author of the casino bill, said last night he's "very grateful and appreciative of the Senate's expeditious action" on the casino bill.

"This is not a perfect legislation but I respectfully ask the governor to seriously consider it so we can begin the process of [appointing] commissioners and selecting applicants," Demapan told *Saipan Tribune*.

Demapan said he does not know of any particular investor that will apply for the exclusive Saipan casino license.

In the Senate session yesterday, representatives from Bridge Capital were present. Former Senate president Juan Demapan testified on the casino bill yesterday and raised concerns about its language. He

likened this particular bill to the botched \$190.8-million no-bid power purchase agreement between the former governor and Saipan Development LLC.

Press secretary Angel Demapan, when asked last night whether the bill is as good as signed, said the governor has not had a chance to review it, "especially the amendments that were approved in the legislative process."

The Senate vote came just four months after "shelving" the last House casino bill, and months after other gaming laws were enacted including video lottery and electronic gaming.

In the House session on Monday, Rep. Ralph Yumul (Ind-Saipan), one of those who strongly opposed the casino bill, said it is "reckless" for the House to vote on the bill—on the day it was introduced and placed on calendar for action—without conducting any public hearing on it or without being referred to a committee.

But the bill's author said what's reckless is "if we continue to [let] our people to suffer," referring to the 25-percent pension cut, among other things.

Legalizing casino operations on Saipan has been a divisive issue in the CNMI for several years now. Casino gambling is legal only on Tinian and Rota but as of today, only Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino is operating in the CNMI.

POB

From Page 1

be generated in the investment program. The CNMI is essentially using taxpayers' dollars to pay more expensive debt than the current cheaper debt to the Settlement Fund. This is not a rational proposition," she said.

Given the short window the Settlement Fund created for the government to improve its financial position, "I do not believe this precious time should be spent on 'pie in the sky' initiative," she said. The limited investment horizon is estimated at an average of 2.4 years.

For Ralbovsky, structural reform is needed to unlock the potential of the CNMI and to rejuvenate its economy.

The goals of issuing POBs are generally to borrow at affordable interest rates, lengthen the payment period, and therefore lower the annual payment requirements. And if successfully implemented with affordable interest rates, POBs may reduce the pressure on the general fund's annual budget.

However, Ralbovsky believes it is not feasible for the CNMI to float a pension obligation bond at this time.

First, she cited the CNMI's credit rating of B2, originally issued by Moody's Investor Services in 2003. A B2 rating, she said, is below investment grade.

However, Ralbovsky indicated that CNMI can use a method called "market comparables" to gauge how thinly traded bonds might be priced.

WAGE

From Page 2

ity bills while \$1 million is set aside for payment of outstanding late charges in prior years.

Because of CUC's newly approved base rate hike, Tenorio projects the utility bills of schools to increase by 15 percent.

"All others" will be allocated \$3 million, an increase of \$1 million over what it is currently getting.

School repairs and mainte-

She selected the situation of Puerto Rico bonds because Puerto Rico is below investment grade rated and is a frequent issuer. Being a frequent issuer, she said, provides the benefit of price discovery and readily observable market prices.

"Recent market trading data showed that BB2 rated Puerto Rico G.O. bonds were trading at 9 percent yield and its pension obligation bonds—which is taxable—were trading at 13 percent yield. Given that the CNMI debt is likely to be rated below those of Puerto Rico's, and that the CNMI has not been a frequent issuer and therefore does not possess market awareness, the yields of any new CNMI debt would likely be higher than what Puerto Rico's current bonds were trading at if the CNMI were even able to issue this debt," she explained in her March 3 letter to lawmakers.

Ralbovsky added that because court judgments have priority over other creditors, including bondholders, therefore "any potential investors in the CNMI debt would be junior to the Settlement Fund in the claims to the CNMI general fund."

Given the size of the judgment—about \$750 million—this would be viewed as "materially negative" by any potential investors.

"And if they were to decide to still invest in the CNMI debt, there is likely a demand for even higher interest rates than the CNMI debt ratings may suggest," she added.

nance—an area that was not funded under the fiscal 2014 budget—is allotted \$1.5 million. The board was provided yesterday with a list of the priority school projects and maintenance upgrades.

Tenorio emphasized the need for funding for repairs and maintenance following concerns raised by the accreditation commission.

"The \$40 million is really the bare-bones for PSS. I think it's just the right amount for us to run PSS the way we should be running the system," he said.

Settlement Fund's assets reach \$106.3M, up by \$1.5M

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

At the end of January 2014, the Settlement Fund had assets totaling \$106.3 million, an increase of \$1.5 million from Dec. 31, 2013's balance.

Settlement Fund investment consultant Maggie Ralbolvsky of Wilshire Consulting disclosed during her presentation in federal court on Monday that investment return was the main driver behind the \$1.5 million increase.

Ralbolvsky said the Settlement Fund had a positive return of 1.24 percent in January 2014.

Ralbolvsky also reiterated her previous position that pension obligation bonds for the CNMI will be cost-prohibitive and will not be a viable option.

At the same hearing, Fund trustee Joyce CH. Tang, in her status report on the Settlement Fund, disclosed that the NMI Retirement Fund previously paid Express Electronics over \$400,000 for a software that was not delivered.

Tang said the Settlement Fund has commissioned the development of a benefits calculation and audit software program from Wilshire for \$150,000 plus

\$30,000 for training expenses.

Tang said the software program will be able to calculate and audit member's benefits.

Assistant attorney general Reena Patel said the case against Express Electronics is under litigation in Superior Court.

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood said the Fund should get back the \$400,000 and use the money to pay the retirees.

Patel said the CNMI government has no issue with the recovery of the money from Saipan Electronics.

"We're just willing to provide assistance," Patel said.

Attorney Margery Bronster, counsel for Betty Johnson, said that under the settlement agreement, the \$400,000 will be assets of the Settlement Fund.

Tang said they will work with

the CNMI government to recover the amount from Saipan Electronics.

In April 2012, the Fund filed a lawsuit against Gerhard "Gary" Sword and his company, Express Electronics, for their alleged defective pension soft-

ware that has already cost the Fund \$406,060.

In January 2012, two Fund members—Joaquin Q. Atalig and Jesus I. Taisague—also sued Sword and his company over the same alleged non-functioning software.

Alleged victim testifies in rape trial

A Korean tourist testified yesterday how Bradley Demapan, a former resort employee, allegedly raped her in the bushes north of the Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio in July 2013.

The alleged victim was among the government's six witnesses called to the stand yesterday.

Police detective Isapen Bokuku, who is the case agent, was the government's last witness.

ness of the day.

Assistant attorney general Barbara Cepeda is expected to call Guam chief medical examiner Aurelio Espinola and one more witness when trial resumes today, Wednesday.

Attorney Steven Pixley said the defense may call at least two witnesses.

Pixley questioned the relevance of calling Espinola when there's no dead body involved.

The alleged victim basically testified how Demapan and another hotel employee joined her and her female friend's drinking session at the Buoy Bar on the evening of July 25, 2013. Demapan allegedly ended up raping her in the bushes at the beachside.

The hotel's security guard and a tour guide allegedly heard screams and found the alleged victim and Demapan in the bushes north of PIC.

The Office of the Attorney General charged the 27-year-old Demapan with sexual assault in the first degree, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace. He pleaded not guilty. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

Power outage in Susupe on Saturday

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. said yesterday that there will be a scheduled four-hour power outage this Saturday, March 8, 2014, affecting mainly Susupe and its surrounding areas.

The power interruption will be from 7:30am to 11:30am and the purpose is to de-energize the primary lines for CUC line crew to safely relocate three main primary power poles.

Water services will also be affected in the area during the power interruption; however, all services should be restored after the power is back on.

Areas that will be affected include the southern side of Susupe (Juan Nong St., San Isidro Av., Hamalap Ln., Brigida St., Barbara Av., Carmen Av., Chalan Kanoa Dr., Abraham Pl., and Kotdet Pl.), Mount Carmel Cathedral and school; Saipan Community Church and school; traffic lights in Susupe near Mt. Carmel Cathedral; and wastewater lifts stations.

CUC is urging the community to take alternate routes or exercise caution when driving through affected areas. For more information, call 664-7500/7503. *(CUC)*



WINTER MEETING

Gov. Eloy S. Inos attends the opening session of the 2014 National Governors Association Winter Meeting held on Feb. 22, in Washington, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
CNMI HEAD START PROGRAM
P.O. BOX 501370, SAIPAN, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 664-3751/68 Fax: (670) 664-3760

Head Start Policy Council Meeting Agenda

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Head Start Policy Council hereby gives notice that it will have a Regular Meeting on Thursday, March 6, 2014 at 5:00 p.m., Tanapag Head Start Resource Center, Tanapag, Saipan.

- I. Preliminary Matters
 1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. Quorum
 4. Adoption of Agenda
- II. Public Comments¹
- III. Miscellaneous Matters
- IV. Executive Session²
 1. Recommendation to Hire
- V. Next Meeting
- VI. Adjournment

This meeting is open to the public, interested individuals are welcome to attend.

/s/ Roy Ada
Chairperson

¹ Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.

² Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Council may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

On behalf of the NMI Volleyball Association & Guam Volleyball Federation

THANK YOU!

TO ALL THE SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS

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Volunteers: Coach Go, Megumi Murakami, Shinako Tanaka, Miki Oyama, Erika Habaguchi, Jeff Carlucci, Evan Todd, Jac Jones, Kauai Salzman, Laurie Peterka, Amie McRoberts, Jon Cramer, Gabriel White, JR Gechig, John Nekaifes, Tyce Mister, Russ Quinn, Chris Shepherd, Nick Gross, Elena Soll, Mili Saiki, Sean Frink, Tomoko Shimizu, The Yamada-Camacho Family, Al Sound, Linda Anastacio, Nicole LeBlanc-Elliott, Mike Pai, Jazz Rosokow, Jian Joyner, Fumi Himura, MVA staff, Fiesta Staff & Management, and all of our many student volunteers especially those from MHS, SIS, and MCS.

February 15-16

February 21-23

March 2

Underpayment to settlement fund shrinks to \$178K

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Based on the latest court filings by settlement trustee Joyce C.H. Tang, the CNMI government's underpayment to the settlement fund for the period from Oct. 5, 2013, through Jan. 11, 2014, is actually only \$178,027.

That is significantly lower than the original total of \$968,407. The drop was due to new payments made on the government's employer contribution and the up-to-date records provided to the settlement trustee.

Tang explained that the early computation that resulted in underpayments reaching \$968,407 included underpayments of em-

ployer contributions by autonomous agencies.

The underpayment of employer's contributions represents the CNMI government and autonomous agencies' portion of employer contributions for active employees who are members of the settlement fund. These payments, which are due each pay period, fluctuate based on a variety of factors, which are information within the government's control, according to Tang.

"Since the settlement fund does not have the actual earnings for a current pay period, it can only estimate the amount of the employer's contribution. Until the government makes a payment for a particular pay

period, which payment is delivered with a report showing the exact amount the government is paying for each employee, the settlement fund cannot calculate exactly the amount due for employer's contribution," said Tang in her filing dated Feb. 24.

She said the settlement fund is not usually provided the gross earnings for computing employer's contribution until a check and report is received. Tang said the calculations are "further complicated" because the settlement fund has to deter-

mine if an employee is a Class 1 or Class II employee, and after it determines the class an employee falls into, the total employee's earnings for each class are divided by a percentage. It is only after deriving this number, Tang said, that the applicable rate is applied.

She explained that the reported \$968,407 underpayment was derived by applying the actuarial rate of 62.15 percent rather than the 37.39 percent actuarial rate applied as of June 26, 2013.

Tang admitted in her filing

that "the incorrect rate applied by the settlement fund based on estimated gross earnings resulted in a much higher underpayment."

Due to concerns over the high underpayments that were earlier reported to the court, Tang and the government worked to resolve the issue and updated earnings information were provided to the trustee.

Additionally, the government has made payments, about \$143,000, on Feb. 14.

As of pay period ending

Jan. 25, 2014, Tang said that underpayment is much less than previously stated, now amounting to only \$178,027. This amount is composed of the following underpayments from autonomous agencies: Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., \$43,468; Northern Marianas College, \$24,373; Public School System-local, \$104,457; PSS-federal, \$103.

The underpayment of employer contribution from the NMI government totals \$5,625 as of Jan. 25, 2014.

Mobile clinic in Kagman this Saturday

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. will be exhibiting the Mobile Health Clinic on Saturday, March 8, 2014, at the Kagman Community Center from 8am to 11:30am.

In our efforts to bring healthcare services to individuals residing in the northern villages, these services will be provided on this day for attendees. Services will include skin testing, flu vaccination, blood pressure and glucose checks, and well

child checks. Other services available, however, will be limited, including Pap smear, pelvic and breast exams. Doctors will be present and education about health will be available. The community is encouraged to take advantage of the services provided. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

For more information contact CHCC Public Health at (670) 234-8950 or (670) 236-8703. **(PR)**



JAYSON CAMACHO

FBI Special Agent Jamie Prida gives a presentation at the Rotary Club of Saipan yesterday. Prida specializes in fraud involving Medicaid, Medicare, and other health programs.

Patients checking out of the hospital or their healthcare provider should not be afraid to ask for an itemized bill as that is one way to avoid fraudulent billings, according to Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Jamie Prida.

Speaking to members of the Rotary Club of Saipan dur-

ing their regular meeting yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan, Prida recounted FBI investigations into fraudulent billings from hospitals and other healthcare providers in the U.S. mainland.

One example is a case at a big hospital in Texas where Prida and another FBI agent recovered \$50 million for ser-

vices that were never rendered and cost reports that should not have been made.

He also said that he investigated three private physicians in the billing for services that were not rendered or needed.

"The three doctors ended up going to federal prison," he said.

Other examples of fraud that

he has investigated involved ambulance companies, durable medical equipment, and home health agencies.

He said that billings cannot only be done by hospitals as "it is the hospital's choice to chose an outside billing company."

He said that based on his experience, fraudulent billings are rampant in the U.S. mainland. "Hard hitters were Florida, Texas, California, and New York."

In Texas alone, he said, the money involved equaled trillions of dollars.

A Rotary member asked him if this form of fraudulent billing happens in the CNMI and, if so, how much money is involved. Prida replied: "We don't have any information yet but we know it's happening."

He said that hospitals have to give an itemized billing if requested because it's the law and that every bill from hospitals should have Current Procedure Terminology that tells the codes of what the billing is about.

Since Saipan has no branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, people with any information or complaint about their hospital or healthcare provider billings can go to the FBI office at the Bank of Hawaii building in Garapan. **(Jayson Camacho)**



BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT
Happy 21st birthday to Peter Anthony L. Ngeskebei! May the Lord above bless you and guide you throughout the years. Hope you enjoy your day with lots of love and blessing. We love you! From: Ki'ilani and KarieAnnie C. Ngeskebei, Karen C., DaisyAnne, Dad, Mom, and families.

Century Finance Company, Ltd. is inviting qualified U.S. workers to apply for the following positions:

Accountant

Associate's Degree in Finance or Accounting with at least 3 years work-related experience in a financing or commercial/credit loan business. Must be proficient in the use of SAP R3 FICO and Loan Management Information Systems, MS Excel, Word and PowerPoint software. Must be able to work under time pressure and must work flexible hours. CPA not required.

Applications can be obtained and submitted at Century Finance Company, Ltd. office located on the 2nd Floor, JP Center Building at Beach Road, Garapan. Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, Monday, March 17, 2014.

Century Finance Company, Ltd. is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified women, minorities and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.mp

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(This ad is paid for by NMHC.)

OPENING DATE: FEBRUARY 10, 2014
CLOSING DATE: MARCH 7, 2014 TIME: 4:30 PM

SALARY RANGE IS GRADE LEVEL 33, STEP 01
AT \$26,131.390 TO STEP 05 AT \$31,757.680

"ROTA FIELD OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE"

Detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be picked up, together with NMHC's employment application form, during regular working hours at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan during regular working hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Jocelyn C. Seman, Office Manager at (670) 234-9447/7689 or by email to officemanager@nmhc.gov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. is inviting qualified U.S. workers to apply for the following positions:

General Maintenance Worker

High school diploma or equivalent with experience in equipment and appliance repair. Must have some basic knowledge and troubleshooting experience in plumbing and electrical systems, masonry, carpentry, and other cleaning and general maintenance work inside and outside facilities. Must be able to lift and move heavy supplies and objects. Must be willing to work flexible hours.

Housekeeper (2)

High school diploma or GED Certificate. Dependable attendance, hard working and follows directions well. Must be available to work early mornings, late nights and weekends.

Messenger

High school graduate. Dependable attendance, hard working and follows directions well. Good oral and written communication skills and good driving skills are required. Must provide and maintain own vehicle for work and must be available to work early mornings, late nights and weekends.

Applications can be obtained and submitted at L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. office located on the 2nd Floor, JP Center Building at Beach Road, Garapan. Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, Monday, March 17, 2014.

L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified women, minorities and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

Rizalina M. Gatus
P.O. Box 505309
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No.: (670) 483-9213

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the) FCD CN
Petition for the) CIVIL ACTION
Change of Name of:) NO. 14-0060

RIZALINA M. GATUS) **NOTICE OF**
Petitioner) **HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on March 20, 2014 at 10:30 a.m. in Courtroom 205A, before the Honorable Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 7th day of February, 2014.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

CNMI represented at SILC Congress in San Diego



18 to 21.

Gernadine Camacho, Emeterio Fitial, and Elvira Seman enjoyed the experience of meeting with their U.S. mainland counterparts who gathered for this annual event to discuss matters pertinent to the initiatives and efforts of the Statewide Independent Living Councils, also known as SILC.

The CNMI delegation—their first attendance at this national forum—actively networked with SILC peers and discussed topics such as working with the State Rehabilitation Councils, reaching out to underserved populations, emergency and disaster, monitoring and evaluating the State Plan for Independent Living, youth initiatives, etc.

According to Fitial, CNMI SILC secretary, “I learned about the life of Ed Roberts, who was known as the father of independent living in the U.S. He did a

lot of advocacy work to make sure establishments, including universities, are accessible to people with disabilities.”

Seman, administrative assistant for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and staff assigned to provide support to the CNMI SILC, shared that they met with their colleagues from Region IX who attended this year’s forum: “We got together with some Region IX folks from California, Arizona, and Hawaii, and one of the agenda items was the election of a representative and alternate representative to the SILC Congress. Larry Wanger [Arizona SILC executive director] and myself were elected to represent Region IX on the SILC at the national level. I will work with Larry to promote Region IX’s independent living agenda and transmit important information on to the CNMI SILC, especially with regards to best or emerging practices.”

The mission of the CNMI SILC is to serve individuals with significant disabilities and to promote their independence, productivity, integration, and in-

cluding the CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council at the 2014 SILC Congress held in San Diego, Calif., on Jan. 18-21 and participating in the march were Elvira Seman, left, OVR administrative assistant; Emeterio Fitial, back center, SILC secretary; and Gernadine Camacho, holding CNMI flag, SILC vice chair. Also in photo is Larry Wanger, Arizona’s SILC executive director, back right. Wanger and Seman were elected by their peers to represent Region IX as representative and alternate representative, respectively, to the SILC Congress.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

clusion into society. The Council supports the independent living philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and advocacy.

For more information about CNMI SILC, contact the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation at (670) 322-6537/8; TTY: (670) 322-6449; fax: (670) 322-6536; or email: nmidir@ovrgov.net. (OVR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

2014 SILC Congress participants from Region IX included those from CNMI, California, Arizona, and Hawaii. From the CNMI: Elvira Seman, center, administrative assistant for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; Emeterio Fitial, standing back, SILC secretary; and Gernadine Camacho, seated right, SILC vice chairperson.



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

WSR School shirts now available for sale

The last day to order William S. Reyes Elementary School shirts will be on March 28, 2014, Friday. Youth sizes XS-L and adult S-XL will cost \$10. Adult XXL and XXXL will be \$20. Please stop by the main office to place your orders. Available colors: Carolina blue, navy blue, royal blue, pink, yellow, gray, and black. (PR)

NBG main gate to close due to construction

SANTA RITA, Guam—The Naval Base Guam main gate will be closed on March 8, 6pm to March 9, 4am due to minor construction. All traffic to and from

the base will be directed to the back gate along Route 2A during this period. Appropriate signage will be posted to warn vehicular traffic accordingly. (PR)

Karidat invites public to ‘spring cleaning’

Karidat Social Services is getting rid of some of its items with an “office makeover” in order to expand its food pantry and family services offices.

It is inviting the community to come to the Karidat main office in Chalan Kanoa (next to the cemetery), on March 8, 2014, from 9am to 3pm to take what you may need for your family. Please bring your own plastic bags or boxes to take home the

items you select.

For more information, call 234-6981. (Karidat)

Family grief support meeting on March 6

A group that is in the process of forming a Compassionate Friends chapter on Saipan will be holding its monthly grief support meeting on Thursday, March 6, from 6pm to 7:30pm, in the NMPASI conference room on Middle Road, in Gualo Rai. For more information, call Jill Derickson at 989-9821 or e-mail: jilld@pticom.com. To learn more about The Compassionate Friends, visit their website at www.compassionatefriends.org. (PR)



Kanoa Resort

Saipan

(1) OPERATIONS MANAGER

Qualifications: Associate’s Degree or a minimum of two years experience preferably in Tourism, Hotel & Restaurant or Business Management. Ability to work flexible hours including nights, weekends, and holidays. Must possess strong leadership and communication skills. Organized, motivated, analytical and creative, as well as comfortable in directing others. Must be proficient in various computer software applications and has a proven track record of meeting budgets, an understanding of P&L statements and cost/inventory control.

(1) MANAGER, SPORTS AND RECREATION

Qualifications: Associates degree in an appropriate field or equivalent years of relevant experience. At least 3 years experience in sports and recreation, at managerial capacity, in a five-star Hotel, Club, or Resort. Team player, excellent communication, organizational, and multitasking skills are a must. Must be able to work flexible hours including nights, weekends, and holidays.

(4) GUEST SERVICES AGENT

Qualifications: High School diploma or GED certificate. Minimum of 2 years work experience in providing quality customer and personal services. Must be able to handle customer complaints with efficiency. Have multitasking skills, be detailed-oriented, and be able to solve problems in order to effectively deal with internal and external customers. Must be able to work flexible hours including nights, weekends and holidays.

(1) GARDENER / LANDSCAPER

Qualifications: High school graduate or equivalent. Two years previous work experience. Basic knowledge of Horticulture. Must be able to work outdoors exposed to all weather conditions. Employees in these occupations need anywhere from a few days to a few months of training.

(1) ELECTRICIAN

Qualifications: High School graduate or equivalent. Able to service, repair, calibrate, regulate, fine-tune or test machines, devices and equipment that operate primarily on electrical or electronic principles. Must be able to work in a flexible way that allows for changes in assignments and priorities depending upon identified needs of the department. Minimum of five (5) years work experience required.

(1) A/C REFRIGERATION MECHANIC / TECHNICIAN

Qualifications: Able to install and repair industrial and commercial refrigeration systems. Require post-secondary instruction from technical and trade schools or community colleges that offer programs in air-conditioning and refrigeration or and associate’s degree. Completion of an apprenticeship program or two (2) to four (4) years of experience.

(4) FOOD AND BEVERAGE WAIT STAFF

Qualifications: High school diploma or equivalent. At least 6 months serving experience preferably in hotel operations. Good customer service, communications and interpersonal skills are required. Knowledge of cash, check and credit card handling procedures required.

(4) LIFEGUARD

Qualifications: High school diploma or equivalent. Must be able to swim and have an outgoing personality and the ability to motivate with enthusiasm. Proposed ideas or find ways to improve services, systems and/or procedures. Direct and lead activities for guests of all ages. Certified CPR, First Aid and Lifeguard.

(1) EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Qualifications: Associate’s Degree preferred. At least two years of relevant experience. Provide high-level administrative support by conducting research, preparing statistical reports, handling information requests, preparing financial statements, and performing clerical functions such as preparing correspondence, receiving visitors, arranging conference calls, and scheduling meetings. May also train and supervise lower-level clerical staff.

Interested applicants may send their applications to hr@kanoaresort.com. Application forms may be obtained at our Security Office located at the back wing of our resort. To be considered, applications must be submitted not later than March 6, 2014. Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

Kanoa Resort is an Equal Opportunity Employer
Qualified Women, Minorities, Veterans and Persons with Disabilities are urged to apply.



PHOTOS BY ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Marianas Ocean opened with a grand party last Friday at the Mariana Resort & Spa.

300 attend Mariana Ocean opening

Kan Pacific Saipan opened Marianas Ocean with much fanfare last Friday with over 300 guests motoring to the island's northern tip to take part in the unveiling of the retail store for soap and other beauty products.

No less than Mariana Resort & Spa president Yoshihiro Kitami and family welcomed VIP guests from the government and private sector to the grand opening.

Kitami said Mariana Ocean will offer tourists in the CNMI an opportunity to share their island experience with family and friends back home.

He said tourists can relive the wonderful memory of their vacation on Saipan with the over 50 soap scents, bath salts, lip balms and lip butter, body and facial lotions, various body creams and hair mists that the new store offers.

Kitami, who was accompanied by his two sons and uncle, said their family has had an ongoing 25-year love affair with Saipan starting with the opening of the 18-hole Mariana Country Club golf course and progressed with the building of Mariana Resort & Spa and now continues with the grand opening of Mariana Ocean, which will have two locations—one at the Marpi landmark and one at the more centrally located Garapan tourist district.

Mariana Resort & Spa general manager Gloria Cavanagh said the turnout would have

easily topped 400 if not for the heavy rain on Friday.

"There were about 300 people altogether who attended. If the weather was better, I am quite sure that we would have had almost 400. We are very happy, though, with the turnout. I believe that everyone had fun. The owner has been unable to stop smiling since the event, the public reaction was fantastic. I want to thank those that were there to help celebrate our grand opening. The remarks were of happiness to find a luxurious locally made product that they can share with their family and friends off-island."

Acting governor Jude U. Hoshneider also spoke during the event and congratulated the Kitami family and Kan Pacific for the opening of Mariana Ocean.

"It's always encouraging to see new businesses opening their doors on our islands because it's a great indicator of how well our economy is doing. Local business is the driving force of our islands. It buoys our citizens, improves our communities, and grows our island economy. It is for that reason that our government needs to work together with our businesses to ensure their continued success."

The grand opening of Mariana Ocean was both a visual and gastronomic delight, with Kan Pacific spending over

\$12,000 for the sumptuous buffet spread that included fresh and grilled seafood, various delectable desserts, and even executive chef William Retardo's famous *paella* dish.

Red and white wine, pink and blue champagne, as well as other spirits also flowed freely all evening and as if that's not enough, the hotel also didn't scrimp on the décor with two-foot ice sculptures of dolphins and swans adorning the buffet tables.

Other VIPs that attended the grand opening of Mariana Ocean were former governor Juan N. Babauta, former lieutenant governor Diego Benavente, Sens. Pete Reyes (IR-Saipan) and Paul Manglona (IR-Saipan), Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan), and other government officials and private sector leaders. *(Mark Rabago)*



One of several lovely hostesses Mariana Resort hired specifically for the grand opening stands by some of the items sold at Mariana Ocean.



Mariana Ocean sells a variety of lip balms and lip butter.



Mariana Ocean has some 50 soap scents to choose from.



After its successful Mariana Salt venture, Mariana Ocean branched out to making bath salts.



Bridge Capital's Irene Tantiado checks out some of the bath salts for sale.



Acting governor Jude U. Hofchneider congratulates the Kitami family and Kan Pacific Saipan for the opening of Mariana Ocean.



Some 300 guests attended the grand opening of Mariana Ocean at the poolside of Mariana Resort.



Mariana Resort spent \$12,000 for the grand opening's sumptuous seafood-themed buffet spread.



Acting governor Jude U. Hofchneider is joined by Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan), Pacific Trading Co.'s Charles Cepeda, former lieutenant governor Diego Benavente, Pacific Islands Club Saipan's Vicky Benavente, and Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Alex Sablan, among others.



Mariana Resort general manager Gloria Cavanagh, third from right, greets guests at the grand opening.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Ukrainian victory turns toward tragedy

The stakes are changing rapidly in Ukraine. The people have spoken in Kiev. But now Russian President Vladimir Putin has spoken more loudly.

By Sunday, Kiev's new interim leaders charged that Russians had invaded. Putin asserted that his forces were merely protecting Russian interests in Crimea. He appeared undeterred by his 90-minute talk with President Barack Obama on Saturday, leading experts to question if Ukraine's regime could stave off a military conflict and possible partition.

These, of course, are the unintended consequences of Ukraine's populist uprising. Its first "Orange Revolution" of a few years ago failed, and the current one, which resulted in the departure of President Viktor Yanukovich, is in crisis. Ukrainians only have to look to 2008, when Putin's military rolled into Georgia, to imagine a worsening of the standoff.

Ukraine's power shift began last fall when Putin pulled the rug out from under the country's plan to ally itself with the European Union. Yanukovich took Putin's promise of a substantial loan to turn toward the motherland, setting off the Kiev protests, which erupted in violence last month.

The Ukrainian people are now fiercely divided. Russian flags are flying all over the eastern portion of the country, in the autonomous region of Crimea and beyond. And Putin gladly is coming to the rescue of the Russian-speaking minority, whose sympathies appear to lie with him and not to the Ukrainian protesters of the west.

Obama has made forceful appeals to Putin, who seems not to care much what the U.S. and Europe will do. Sanctions are being discussed. NATO diplomats are mobilizing, and the United Nations is worried about Putin's unlawful aggression.

"Everything is on the table," said Secretary of State John Kerry, who plans a trip to Kiev on Tuesday.

If Russia's militarism has an upside, it might be that Obama and Congress could put aside some of their nagging differences and come together quickly to establish effective responses. Obama spoke Sunday to European leaders.

Ukraine's new leaders need money, support and diplomatic pressure to solve the burgeoning crisis and forestall further tragedy.

It remains to be seen whether Putin will go all the way and engage Ukraine's lesser military in battle. But the last few days in Ukraine have added to the disturbing image that whatever Putin wants, Putin gets.

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ZDA 14



IF BARACK HAD GONE TO MIDDLE SCHOOL WITH VLADIMIR PUTIN

Mardi Gras the feast before the fast

Fat Tuesday, or shrove Tuesday is the feast before the fast. And what is the feast we've got? The reality we have on our hands.

We are used at looking at past problems and the future prospects. What if reality in its entirety is so way beyond our comprehension that the only reality we have is that one moment in time that constitutes our life?

To be sure, there are ancestors and parents, including the cultural milieu that sustained us, that constitute our "before," and there are progenies, or even just folks influenced and affected by our feelings, thoughts, and behavior, that will live "after," but neither really comprise the wholeness that we are.

So the feast and fast dichotomy is not just an annual occurrence in the calendar. It is a dynamic embedded in life itself, similar to birth and death, of possibilities and limits. I have taken the 86 years of my intentional existence as my one moment in time, daily experienced at once as a feast and a fast. As poet Kazantzakis wrote: the moment we were born also began the first day of our dying. My reality encompasses both dynamic. It is my mind that separates them apart. My body keeps it together.

Those who had gone before us marked today as a great reminder that life is a feast. When I taught Oral English, I had my students practice their English by talking about themselves, the subject they did not need to read about to know. I asked them to talk about what was real, not the illusory "face" they dressed for public display. I follow in the same path.

In the Seven Year Itch of my writing years that commenced mid-year last year, I shall write of my experiences. Of the 68 years so far, the issue is not "where to begin" as it is "when to stop." Speculations of what could have been, or what could be, are idle. What was done is done. Period. What will be is a matter of choice in the midst of the surprises and the unfathomable mystery that life invariably present. We live out of intuition more than strategic plans.

My life ends Dec. 15, 2031. We can discuss how I arrived at my statistical probability but that really is not the question, is it? The question of longevity preoccupies human beings since we contemplated and meditated on our existence. In our time, we still resist the call to take hold of our own destiny. We would rather leave it in the hands of others. Do I keep writing until 2031? I will observe a 10-year period of silence before that time. That's absolute quietude. That leaves seven years of recording memories of feasts and fasts from now until then.

This week on Saipan, particularly with the drop-ins at the *pala-pala* in front of the JP Centre building last Monday, and on Wednesday and Friday, were/are occasions to review the feast and to be reminded of the fasts of life. The downcast and occasional rain from

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.



the low depression east kept wanderers few.

Feasts are times of abundance, where possibilities abound. Shrove Tuesday and the Mardi Gras may have deteriorated into regrettable rites of debauchery in some quarters but its religious beginnings were for receiving of the big "yes" on our life, along with the big "yes" response that we dared echo in kind!

I dilly-dallied in Dalian once, but that was a summer. It was fun drooling down three blocks of public market in front of the train station last Friday, but I skipped the street market to stay out of the cold. But abundance was evidently in the minds of the operators of all the stalls, and this Saturday, also at the duty-free shops of Dalian, Incheon, Osaka, and on board Asiana. The ads, at Saipan airport and Galleria included, are tailored to get everyone to buy at "sale" or "discounted" prices.

At the rate everyone uses their plastics, the economy of scale is healthy. Looking and smelling good evidently is in people's agenda. There are porcelain dolls including those in the Galleria on Saipan, many redheads and blondes to boot, of all ages and all genders.

The feast before the fast in its religious garb was not in people's minds at Duty-Free but I was clear that feasting was their choice in that transient moment when they were convinced they would be better off with a purchase, and that it was a bargain.

Both are illusory. As Rockefeller confessed, no one ever has enough, including money, and certainly goods. Owning the latest gadgets or fashionable attires does not a person make. There are no savings on discounts. We do not save; we spend.

No, mine was feasting on the shrimp, scallops, and salmon served on my flight with a cupful of rice topped with scrambled eggs, served by stewards who practiced their English boldly. The seafood still tasted well even after I mistakenly poured the salad dressing on it. I buttered the bread but skipped the nut-topped dessert. The red wine pushed everything down nicely. When I got out of the Saipan airport and the warm air slapped my face, my body cried out loud: I am home. That was my feast.

What was yours?

EDITORIAL POLICY

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US: Asia Pacific hegemony

In the calm of our pearly archipelago, we occasionally flex our muscles on issues like military plans, revenue potential from migratory fish and seabed resources, among other local concerns with federal and geopolitical implications.

Didn't we also have pipe dreams about the sale of pozzolan that died a slow death sinking into the sea around Pagan? Where are the marshland reed scientists who spouted of the millions of dollars from this failed to market mineral?

Indeed, these are worthy issues for deliberative discussions with the feds. If it listens, to what extent would it accommodate our desire for effective indigenous disposition of what we think historically belong to us? Or will it use security to trump what matters to us?

There are mega analysis and expert views on military hegemony in the Asia Pacific by the U.S. and allied countries. The term "hegemony" simply means control over the entire region this century. It makes it a difficult task placing our interest into context for nowhere is there mention the interest of the CNMI in white papers prepared about U.S. Asian Pacific policy.

Would Japan retain the pacifist position under her constitution or would ultra-nationalism eventually shift it in defense of the Senkaku Islands? Are there serious concerns that China has started flexing her muscles to control water vital to its commerce and entry into the Pacific in search of a global role?

Our country has matchless firepower even on technological weaponry that nobody wants to mess with and not with forward bases in the entire global village. China is alone. It isn't interested in securing the waters off the West Coast or places away from its immediate jurisdiction.

It's clear our country's agenda is regional hegemony and would not accept anything that might reduce its dominance on a global basis. Thus, our issues are dwarfed and tucked within the larger picture of global domination.

But would we still rule global hegemony in light of a decision by the Obama administration to systematically reduce our global influence that includes cutting the size of the U.S. Army to WWII level? Indeed, the price of freedom is very high but it is "never too high" as expressed by Presidents Kennedy, Reagan, and Bush. Not when

we're talking about protecting our freedom and global security. It shows Obama mixes fantasy and reality in this case.

On Fitial's extradition

The issue is a foreign affairs matter under the purview of the departments of State and Justice. This is explained in plain language under pertinent provisions of the Covenant Agreement.

With this in mind, why would Rep. Francisco S. Dela Cruz employ political spin unjustly demonizing Gov. Eloy Inos of trying to wash his hands? Isn't this a highly irresponsible allegation? Is adolescent political spin far more vital than truth and integrity?

The matter involves a sovereign country that could only be handled by the departments of State and Justice or the feds. Why adopt a useless resolution that depicts inadequacies how ill informed you and colleagues are what the ruling provisions provide as a matter of protocol inherent under the agreement?

Perhaps it's a perfect excuse to veer off answering what solutions you have for the 25-percent cut in retirees' pay, increase in health premiums, deductibles and medication, planned increase in power bills, and the impending increase in food commodities? Are you fearful of real people issues?

The ill-timed spout is far from factual, therefore an apology is in order for the governor. No worries, sir. I'm no fan of this administration but you must learn to discern what's Caesar's. Read the agreement so you eliminate ludicrous and adolescent accusations. Ever heard of the word integrity? Is your politically warped spin anywhere near this term?

Economics vs security

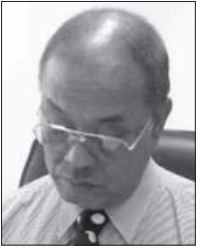
Our aspiration is focused on potential economic benefits from migratory fish and seabed resources. Whether this aspiration could be attained realistically or otherwise remains to be seen.

We do know of fishing nations nearby who pay fees for harvesting migratory fish on a quota basis all over the Pacific. What's our share in the harvest of highly lucrative seabed resources within the 200-mile EEZ around the NMI?

Indeed, some have mentioned what the U.N. Charter on Indigenous

By **JOHN DELROSARIO**

Special to the Saipan Tribune



John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.

Rights declares or reasons the U.S. refuses to be a signatory to the U.N. Law of the Sea agreement. As we pace these issues moving forward, it also pays to be realistic what the U.S. Magnuson-Stevens Act provides for U.S. coastal states and territories. Application of laws center on the Magnuson-Stevens Act, not the usually spineless U.N. declarations often muted or compromised by money from donor countries.

Difficult unraveling the geopolitical implications of NMI concerns may be, it should, however, help the islands meet future expenses while absolving U.S. mainland taxpayers doling out what they should pocket for their own family use at home. Again, ours is the potential for economic prosperity. It may be a simplistic view but a view that is often much more sensible than expanded security.

A partnership

With global hegemony uppermost in its agenda, perhaps it makes sense exploring with the Department of Defense forms of assimilation and partnership where no one is left standing at the fence hoping for an invitation to play ball.

Eventually, military communities would be established on Tinian, southern Saipan, facilities in Lower Base, and Pagan. A partnership is in order and an issue to push for with DOD. This government is bankrupt and we have no way to pay for basic infrastructure anywhere.

For instance, there's a plan to begin moving development to the northern side of the island (Marpi). Has the NMI earmarked sufficient CIP funds to complement this plan or are we ready to scratch our heads in embarrassment and ask developers to shoulder CIP costs that are appropriately our share of development? I think it's called planning.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Educational reality: You harvest what you plant

I'm writing in response to the Jan. 24, 2014, article: "90 pct. of incoming NMC students at remedial level." The focus of the mentioned NMC assessments is the math and English skills of incoming students, and there seems to be some level of surprise concerning student shortcomings. There really is no mystery as to the reasons for these low scores and any honest, reasonably intelligent, qualified teacher who has been teaching for PSS for any time at all knows why the scores are so low. Supplying realistic, on-grade-level instruction in elementary and junior high schools has never been the priority of the majority of those schools. I must state, however, that in that grouping of schools, San Vicente Elementary School stands (pretty much) alone as far as high quality, on-grade-level instruction. In the other elementary and junior high schools it is quite another story. Their priorities are: don't make waves, don't upset parents and students, and move students through the schools by any means possible. If teachers give on-grade-level instruction, supply a reasonable amount of assistance to struggling students, and some students still do not perform well enough to earn passing grades, it causes many problems for the involved teachers. It is a very, very common practice for teachers to be harassed and/or threatened if they assign failing grades to students who earn them, especially if parents or guardians complain to principals. Administrators frequently make the lives of those teachers miserable by (for example) threatening to give poor teacher evaluations and even threatening teachers with contract "non-renewal." Just as a matter of survival and so as to not have a hostile work environment, many teachers teach below grade level or just plain give students unearned grades. Documentation clearly shows the poor student outcomes due to this practice. For example, you will see language arts students passing their classes with average or higher grades that the SAT 10 (standardized test) shows are in the 20 or 30 percentile in language skills (as compared to mainland American students) and have reading scores that show that they are multiple grade levels behind. Parents and students alike know that if a student does earn a failing grade, all parents have to do is complain to the principal and pressure will be applied on the teacher to change the grade. But more commonly, since the teachers already know that giving failing grades to students who earn them will cause them (the teachers) so many problems, teachers just automatically give unearned passing grades. That is why 20 to 30 percent (or higher) of incoming high school freshmen read at elementary school level and the great majority of the rest are at low junior high level (I'm focusing on English language skills here, but this type of thing

happens in math also; ask any high school math teacher). Why would students pay attention in class, do their schoolwork, or even regularly come to class when they can get passing grades for doing little or nothing! So what causes this situation?

There has been a push to make sure all PSS teachers are highly qualified (HQT), and that has been helpful and must continue; however, the push to mandate that all school administrators be HQ has fallen flat. Too many elementary and junior high administrators have not passed the required Praxis tests (and followed through with other HQ related tasks); thus, they are not qualified, and some who have passed the test (and taken the other needed steps to be HQ) are just plain not enlightened enough and/or ethical enough to foster in their schools legitimate, on-grade-level instruction. Those administrators are more interested in pleasing parents and students than in legitimate education. An example of this can be seen at Hopwood. I have been off island for a while, but the last I heard the long time principal there had not passed the appropriate Praxis (and followed the other steps) to be considered highly qualified for his position; thus, he is *not* qualified to hold that position. He is also known for sending students to MHS who can't read and who haven't even passed the needed classes to move to high school. It would be interesting to see which other school administrators are not HQ. I request that this esteemed newspaper acquire and print a list of both HQ and non-HQ PSS school administrators (principals and vice principals). How can we expect high quality students if we do not have high quality administrators? Also, in the future no one should be placed in a school administrator position until they have taken *all* the steps to show they are highly qualified. Yes, all school administrators need to be HQ, but shouldn't all PSS central office top administrators also be highly qualified? Of course they should. As I understand it, there are also Praxis tests for central administrators. A reliable source has told me that the commissioner of education has exempted herself and other top administrators from taking the tests. Again, how can we expect positive student outcomes and HQ school administrators if the top PSS administrators will not take the appropriate steps to show that they are highly qualified? What do we do about this? There are answers:

First, mandate all PSS central office and school administrators to take the appropriate Praxis tests (and follow the other steps) to show they are HQ and hire only new administrators who have already shown they are HQ. Next, administer yearly, anonymous school-wide surveys to ensure that teachers are not being bullied into giv-

ing unearned grades or into teaching below-grade-level material. Finally, as is done in the U.S. mainland, at the start of each school year supply all teachers with a document showing the grades they gave each student the previous year, student standardized test scores pertaining to instruction in the classes that year, and include student reading levels taken at the end of that year. There should be a fair correlation between these indicators and the grades given. If there isn't, a comment by PSS central should accompany the document stating that there is a problem with student grades. After warnings and/or interventions, if a teacher persists with the practice of giving grades that are not reflected in student skills/knowledge, the teacher should be dismissed from their position (non-renewed and no rehired). I will use the example of freshman language arts to show this type of situation: the yearly grade (or term grade if not a year-long class) average for a student in a language arts class is 3.0 ("B" average), the standardized test score covering language is at the 32 percentile (meaning 68 percent of American students taking the evaluation performed better), and the reading level of the student is fifth grade. The "B" grade is obviously not legitimate. How could a student in a freshman language arts class, with very low language skills, and a fifth grade reading level honestly earn that grade? Short answer: he or she could not. The class is either not on grade level or the grade was just given as a gift and not earned. Unfortunately, in CNMI schools this type of thing happens all too often.

This is not a complicated issue. Teachers simply have to teach on-grade-level material (as all PSS standards and benchmarks demand), give appropriate evaluations, and assign the grades students honestly earn. As for school administrators, other than requesting explanations as to why students do poorly in (or fail) classes, they need to stay out of the grading process and not harass teachers. Finally, parents *must* motivate their children to get to class, do their work, and act in a non-disruptive fashion. Parents do have the right to ask teachers why their children are doing poorly; however, they should *never* cause teachers problems to try to get students unearned grades. I will make this as clear and as simple as I can: Giving or pushing teachers to give students unearned grades harms the students! This practice hurts the very students everyone wants to help and diminishes their futures. Stop harming students!

Timothy Wilson

San Jose, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 86° ▼ 75°	▲ 87° ▼ 75°	▲ 87° ▼ 75°	▲ 87° ▼ 75°	▲ 87° ▼ 75°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲ 84 ▼ 75
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▼ 74
Yap	Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 76
Chuuk	Mostly Sunny	▲ 85 ▼ 78
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▼ 78
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▼ 78
Majuro	Showers	▲ 86 ▼ 80

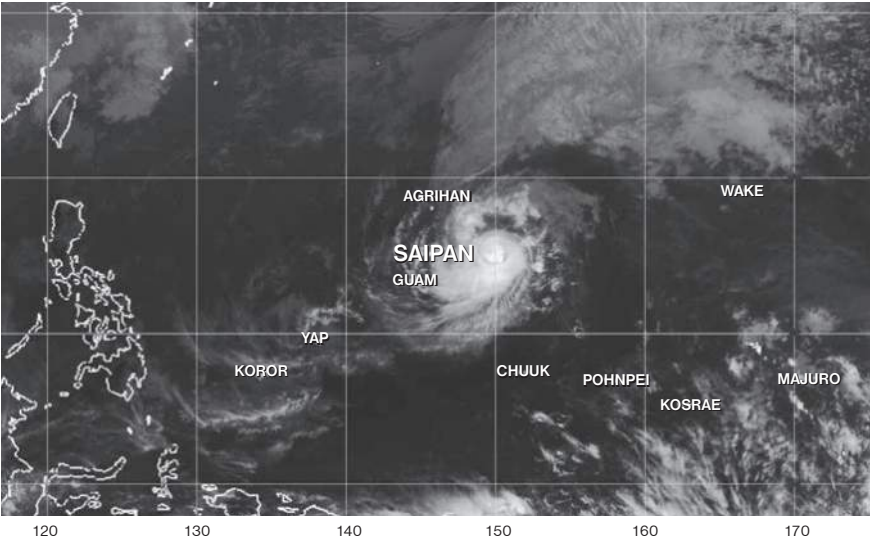
Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲ 72 ▼ 62
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 48 ▼ 26
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 67 ▼ 64
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲ 78 ▼ 68
London	Partly Cloudy	▲ 55 ▼ 39
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲ 73 ▼ 56
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▼ 74
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲ 69 ▼ 53
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 82 ▼ 69
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲ 40 ▼ 30
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲ 47 ▼ 36
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲ 55 ▼ 35
Pusan	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 47 ▼ 30
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲ 61 ▼ 43
Salem	Rain	▲ 56 ▼ 49
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲ 62 ▼ 55
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲ 42 ▼ 24
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲ 48 ▼ 34
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲ 40 ▼ 27

Tides

Saipan Harbor				
4:27 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.5 Feet	
10:14 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet	
5:04 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet	
11:09 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet	

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2014
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Tropical Storm Faxai (03W) is centered near 16N150E or 385 miles east-northeast of Guam with maximum sustained winds of 65 mph and moving northward at 12 mph. Heavy rain and scattered thunderstorms are occurring near the center within 120 miles of 15N150E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are present farther from the center between 12N and 20N from 146E to 155E. For more information on Tropical Storm Faxai, see advisories issued by the National Weather Service under WMO header WTPN31 PGUM and bulletins issued by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center under WMO header WTPN31 PGTW. A surface trough reaches northward from Faxai to end east of Minami Tori Shima near 24N156E. A cold front extends southwestward from west of Minami Tori Shima to end southwest of Iwo To near 21N137E. Scattered showers and extensive cloudiness are seen where these two features are interacting north of a line from 20N146E to 22N155E to 20N168E farther west. Cloudiness and a few showers are north of the front to beyond 25N. A shear line runs westward from northeast of the Marshall Islands at 10N180 to end northwest of Kwajalein at 12N164E. Patchy clouds and showers are evident along and up to 250 miles north of this boundary. A trade-wind disturbance is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms near Kwajalein, Majuro and Butaritari atolls within 70 miles of a line from 8N166E to EQ177E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:32 AM	6:25 PM
Thursday	6:31 AM	6:25 PM
Friday	6:31 AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:30 AM	6:26 PM
Sunday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:14 AM	10:08 PM
Thursday	10:01 AM	11:02 PM
Friday	10:49 AM	11:54 PM
Saturday	11:37 AM	
Sunday	12:26 PM	12:45 AM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

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Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMUT SARI
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

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- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

■ CAMPUS BULLETIN
Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan

To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 25, 2014

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) UA5070 4:15am 5:05am Daily UA5068 8:40am 9:30am Daily UA5039 1:35pm 3:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota UA5038 2:20pm 3:10pm 2, 3, 6 UA5078 6:05pm 6:55pm Daily UA5072 9:50pm 10:40pm Daily	GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN UA5069 2:45am 3:35am Daily UA5071 7:15am 8:05am Daily UA5039 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7 UA5038 12:10pm 1:50pm 2, 3, 6 via Rota UA5077 4:45pm 5:35pm Daily UA5079 8:30pm 9:20pm Daily
SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP) UA5039 1:35pm 2:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7	GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP) UA5038 12:10pm 12:45pm 2, 3, 6
ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM) UA5039 2:40pm 3:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7	ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN UA5038 1:15pm 1:50pm 2, 3, 6
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX) OZ119 4:00am 6:40am Daily	OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN OZ120 9:50pm 2:20am+1 Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT) DL287 6:00am 8:40am Daily DL297 4:30pm 7:20pm Daily	NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN DL298 10:25am 3:00pm Daily DL288 8:55pm 1:30am+1 Daily
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) OZ608 3:10am 6:20am 1, 4, 5, 7	BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN OZ607 9:00pm 1:50am+1 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) OZ606 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ102 2:20am 5:50am 3 OZ606 2:40am 6:30am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 OZ6063 3:30am 7:20am 4, 7 (will increase eff Jan 29) OZ104 2:00pm 5:30pm 6 OZ604 3:20pm 7:10pm Daily	SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN OZ101 8:30am 2:00pm 3 OZ603 9:00am 2:20pm Daily OZ103 7:30pm 1:00am+1 6 OZ605 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ605 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 OZ6053 9:10pm 2:30am+1 3, 6 (will increase eff Jan 29)
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) 3U8648 6:10am 8:40am 1, 4, 5, 7	SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN 3U8647 10:40pm 5:00am+1 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK) MU764 4:00am 8:00am 1, 5	BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN MU763 7:20pm 3:00am+1 4, 7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN) 3U8646 4:20am 7:30am 2, 6	GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN 3U8645 7:40pm 3:00am+1 1, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) OZ606/701 2:10am 11:15am 1 via ICN OZ606/701 2:40am 11:15am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN UA5070/191 4:15am 9:05am 3, 6 via GUM DL287/473 6:00am 10:55pm Daily via NRT UA5068/PR111 8:40am 4:45pm 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM UA5039/183 1:35pm 9:30pm 5 via Guam UA5039/183 1:35pm 9:50pm 1, 4, 7 via Guam UA5038/183 2:20pm 9:30pm 2 via GUM OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN UA5078/183 6:05pm 9:50pm 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN	MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN OZ704/603 12:10am 2:20pm Daily PR110/UA5072 7:35am 5:35pm 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM DL172/288 7:45am 1:30am+1 Daily via NRT UA190/5077 9:55am 5:35pm 2, 7 via Guam UA190/5079 10:00am 5:35pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN UA184/5071 10:55pm 8:05am+1 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM UA184/5071 11:59pm 8:05am+1 2, 5 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG) OZ606/721 2:10am 11:50am 1 via ICN OZ606/721 2:40am 11:50am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN UA5068/179 8:40am 10:35pm 1, 5 via GUM UA5038/179 2:20pm 10:35pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ604/749 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN	HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN OZ746/603 12:30am 2:20pm Daily via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ724/605 1:50pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN UA180/5071 11:10pm 8:05am+1 1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
SAIPAN-TIANJIN (TSN) D2884 10:45am 2:45pm Jan 25, 30, Feb 4, 9, 14, 24	TIANJIN (TSN)-SAIPAN D2885 4:45pm 12:20am+1 Jan 25, 30, Feb 4, 9, 14, 24
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH) D2880 4:30pm 8:00pm Jan 28, Feb 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27	HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN D2881 10:00pm 5:15am+1 Jan 28, Feb 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27
SAIPAN-WUHAN (WUH) D2882 11:00am 3:15pm Jan 27, Feb 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26	WUHAN (WUH)-SAIPAN D2883 5:15pm 12:20am+1 Jan 27, Feb 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; VLK: Vladivostok Air; SYL: Yakutia Air; D: Dynamic Airways.

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan							
FRE 100	17:50	18:20	Daily				
Saipan-Rota				Tinian-Saipan			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
				FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Business

Global stocks slide as tensions build in Ukraine

NEW YORK (AP)—Russia's military advance into Ukraine rattled global markets Monday.

U.S. stocks fell the most in a month and the price of crude oil rose sharply as traders feared Russian exports could be affected by sanctions. Gold and bond prices rose as investors sought safety.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index had its biggest drop since Feb. 3, following markets in Europe and Asia lower, as Russia's military tightened its grip on the Crimea region of Ukraine.

It was the second time this year the U.S. stock market has been roiled by developments in emerging markets. Stocks slipped in January as investors worried about slowing growth in China and other emerging economies. Now a showdown in Ukraine has grabbed investors' attention and stoked fears of a tit-for-tat campaign of economic sanctions between Russia and Western powers.

Financial markets are doing exactly what you would expect them to," said Phil Orlando, chief equity market strategist at Federated Investors. "You have no idea what is going to happen and how this is going to play out."

The S&P 500 index fell 13.72 points, or 0.7 percent, to 1,845.73, the biggest drop since Feb. 3. The index was down as much as 25 points at one point before recouping some of the ground it lost.

The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 153.68 points, or 0.9 percent, to 16,168.03. The Nasdaq composite fell 30.82 points, or 0.7 percent, to 4,277.30.

European markets fell even more. Germany's DAX sank 3.4 percent and Russia's benchmark stock index

plunged 12 percent.

"Europe gets a lot of energy supplies from Russia," said David Kelly, chief global strategist

at JPMorgan funds. "So, Europe would be a lot more directly affected by a trade war with Russia than the United States would."

Kelly says that the most likely scenario is that Russia and Western powers, including the U.S., will reach a compromise relatively quickly. That would send stock prices higher.

As investors sold risky stocks, they bought safer assets such as gold and U.S. government debt securities. The dollar and the Japanese yen also increased in value.

The price of gold rose \$28.70, or 2.2 percent, to \$1,350.30 an ounce, its biggest gain of the year. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which moves inversely to its price, fell to 2.60 percent from 2.64 percent on Friday.

The price of crude following warnings by Washington and other governments that Russia, a major oil exporter, might face sanctions after it seized control of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. Russia was the world's second-largest producer of oil in 2012, accounting for 12.6 percent of global supplies, according to the International Energy Agency.



Trader Peter Tuchman works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Monday, March 3, 2014. Global stock markets are down sharply on tensions over Russia's military advance into Ukraine and the threat of sanctions by Western governments. AP

Obama's 2015 budget appeals to Democrats

WASHINGTON (AP)—Striving for unity among Democrats rather than compromise with Republicans, President Barack Obama will unveil an election-year budget on Tuesday that drops earlier proposals to cut future Social Security benefits and seeks new money for infrastructure, education and job training.

But Obama's almost \$4 trillion budget plan is likely to have a short shelf life. It comes just three months after Congress and the White House agreed to a two-year, bipartisan budget pact that has already set the parameters for this election year's budget work. Democrats controlling the Senate have already announced they won't advance a budget this year and will instead skip ahead to the annual appropriations bills for 2015, relying on new spending "caps" set by December's budget deal that provide \$56 billion less than what Obama wants in 2015.

Obama would divide the extra money equally between the Pentagon and domestic initiatives like boosting manufacturing hubs, job training and preschool programs and cutting energy waste. Republicans are likely to balk at the idea, which would be paid for

by curbing special interest tax breaks and making spending cuts elsewhere in the budget.

Obama has also announced a four-year, \$302 billion plan to boost spending on highways, rail projects and mass transit. Half of the initiative would be financed through corporate taxes. Funding for highway and mass transit projects expires at the end of September, and there's bipartisan interest in finding a supplemental funding stream to augment stagnant revenues from the 18.4 cents-per-gallon gasoline tax.

Obama's budget arrives after a tumultuous year that began with Obama muscling through a 10-year \$600 billion-plus tax increase on upper-bracket earners. Feeling stung, Republicans refused to yield on about \$80 billion in automatic spending cuts that began in March. Then, conservatives in the GOP forced a 16-day partial government shutdown over funding to implement the nation's new health insurance program. The small-bore, two-year budget deal struck by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., emerged from the wreckage to alleviate the toughest automatic cuts.

Apple dials up effort to meld iPhone with cars

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Apple is accelerating the race to make smartphone applications easier and safer to use in cars.

Ferrari, Mercedes-Benz and Volvo are previewing Apple's iPhone technology for cars this week at an auto show in Geneva.

The partnerships give Apple an early lead over Google's loosely knit family of Android phones in a duel to make mobile applications more accessible while drivers are behind the wheel. Apple's iOS mobile software and Google's Android operating system power most of the smartphones in the world.

Just two months ago, Google

Inc. announced it is working with several major automakers to turn Android phones into an essential part of cars. Google hopes to finish work on its system for tethering Android phones to cars by the end of this year.

Apple Inc. announced its automobile ambitions nine months ago when it unveiled its "iOS in the Car" initiative—a reference to the operating system that powers the iPhone and iPad.

Now that the idea is moving closer to reality, Apple is renaming the technology "CarPlay."

The system announced Monday enables iPhones to plug into cars so drivers can call up maps,

make calls and request music with voice commands or a touch on a vehicle's dashboard screen.

By making smartphones work more seamlessly with automobiles, both Apple and Google are hoping to immerse their services even deeper into peoples' lives. In doing so, the companies expect to make money by selling advertising, applications and upgrades on smartphones that will become even more indispensable.

"iPhone users always want their content at their fingertips and CarPlay lets drivers use their iPhone in the car with minimized distraction," said Greg Joswiak, Apple's vice

president of iPhone and iOS product marketing.

Automakers are hoping vehicles that are compatible with the top-selling smartphones will be easier to sell to consumers who can't fathom living without the devices.

Cars of recent vintage increasingly feature electronics designed to cater to drivers' high-tech desires, but those systems still haven't attracted a widespread following. That has led more automakers to conclude that it makes sense to work directly with technology companies such as Apple and Google to turn their cars into smartphone extensions.

Cold weather heats up sales for some companies

NEW YORK (AP)—The harsh winter has been rough for some businesses, but for a lucky few, the frigid weather means more cold, hard cash.

Ace Hardware is having its best winter in more than a decade for snow blower and shovel sales. Waterproof boots are on a long backorder at clothing maker L.L. Bean. And more people are staying home and ordering gooey grilled cheese sandwiches and booze from De-

livery.com.

"The concept of a polar vortex doesn't feel good, but it's good for business," said Kane Calamari, a vice president at Ace Hardware Corp.

Much of the country has been in a deep freeze. Only 32 winters have been colder in the last 119 years, according to Jake Crouch, a climate scientist at the National Climatic Data Center, a division of the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration.

With more Americans stuck indoors, customers are ordering up more meals and arranging to have their laundry picked up through Delivery.com's website and smartphone app. Sales at the company, which operates in major metro areas such as New York, Chicago and Washington D.C., rose 30 percent in January and February compared with the year before. Orders for soups, wine and vodka have spiked.

People are "trying to stay

warm," said Neeraj Sharma, the site's vice president of marketing. "They're hibernating."

But sooner or later, they have to dig out. Sales of shovels and snow blowers have doubled at Oak Brook, Ill.-based Ace Hardware. The company is also shipping salt and other ice melters to southern regions such as Atlanta, which rarely have to deal with severe weather. Total sales are up 20 percent so far this year compared with a year ago.



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW

16,168.03
-153.68
-0.94%

S&P

14,212.74
+3.15
+0.02%

NASDAQ

4,277.30
-30.82
-0.72%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms			
Australian Dollar	1.1184	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7591
British Pound	0.5999	Indian Rupee	61.9338
Canadian Dollar	1.1087	Indonesian Rupiah	11628.8
Chinese Yuan	6.1485	Japanese Yen	101.8148
Euro	0.7269	Malaysian Ringgit	3.2774
		New Zealand Dollar	1.1938
		Philippine Peso	44.7505
		Singapore Dollar	1.2691
		South Korean Won	1070.64
		Swiss Franc	0.8834
		Taiwan Dollar	30.292
		Thailand Baht	32.5367

Nation

Harsh US winter extends into March

WASHINGTON (AP)—On the latest snow day in a winter full of them, residents of parts of the South, Mid-Atlantic and Northeast were coping with several inches of snow on top of a layer of slush.

With accumulations of 4-to-6 inches in Washington, Monday's storm would have been the largest in the nation's capital in all of last year. But in the seemingly endless winter of 2013-2014, it came 2 1/2 weeks after a much bigger storm, and the region settled into a familiar routine of hunkering down.

Schools and government offices were closed. Federal workers stayed home. Young adults gathered on the sloppy, slushy National Mall for a semi-organized, afternoon snowball fight.

By early afternoon, the snow had stopped. But the region will face yet another challenge: another blast of bitterly cold arctic air. Temperatures were expected to dip into the single digits along the Eastern Seaboard on Monday night. That doesn't usually happen after March 1, which is sometimes referred to as the start of "meteorological spring."

If the forecast holds, it would be only the third single-digit day after March 1 in the recorded history of the nation's capital—and the previous two were in 1872 and 1873, according to the National Weather Service.



Mary Kay Queen and her daughter Lucy, 4, sled down a hill in Alexandria, Va., Monday, March 3, 2014. Winter kept its icy hold on much of the country Monday, with snow falling and temperatures dropping as schools and offices closed and people from the South and Mid-Atlantic to Northeast reluctantly waited out another storm indoors.

Records were in danger elsewhere, too. In New Jersey, nearly 6 inches fell in some areas, which could make it the eighth snowiest winter in the last 120 years.

"It's one of the more dis-

ruptive winters of the last several decades," New Jersey state climatologist David Robinson said.

Federal workers are familiar with the routine. This was the fourth time this winter that the

government has shut down because of weather - the most such closures since the back-to-back "Snowmageddon" storms of February 2010.

In downtown Washington, the roads were messy but pass-

able, and the snow had stopped by early afternoon. The worst conditions came during what would have been morning rush hour, but traffic was all but nonexistent. Commuter trains were canceled, Amtrak was on a

limited schedule, and while the Metro subway system stayed open, the massive parking garage at the Springfield, Va., station was nearly empty.

Jim Lee, meteorologist in charge at the National Weather Service in Sterling, Va., noted that every decade in Washington, there are only 6 days with 6-plus inches of snow.

"We've had pretty close to two of them this year, already—and winter's not over," Lee said.

Tourists, who flock to the nation's capital 365 days a year, were seeking out whatever activities they could find.

In the morning, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments inside a chamber packed with out-of-town visitors and legal wonks. By noon, crowds were growing at the National Air and Space Museum, the only Smithsonian institution that was open Monday. Among them were Russ Watters, 60, of St. Louis, and his 14-year-old son, Seth, who was touring Washington with his 8th-grade class.

"We're trying to find stuff that's open, so this is open," Watters said. The group planned to stay on their bus and get drive-by lessons on the city's monuments in the afternoon.

Government offices and schools were also closed throughout Delaware, parts of which got 6-plus inches.

Friends common source of abused prescription meds

CHICAGO (AP)—Most people who abuse addictive prescription painkillers get them for free from friends or relatives, while drug dealers are a relatively uncommon source for those at highest risk for deadly overdoses, a government study found.

People who abuse the most frequently often doctor-shop; more than 1 in 4 who used these drugs almost daily said they had been prescribed by one or more physicians. Almost as many said they got them for free from friends or relatives; only 15 percent of the most frequent abusers said they bought the drugs from dealers or other strangers.

Those abusers "are probably using at much greater volumes and simply asking a friend for a pill now and then is not going to be sufficient," said Dr. Leonard Paulozzi, a researcher at the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to the study, two-thirds of abusers said they used the drugs infrequently and well over half of these users said they got them free from friends or relatives.

Paulozzi and CDC colleagues analyzed four years of nationwide health surveys on nonmedical use of pain relievers including oxycodone and hydrocodone. These include

the brand-name pills OxyContin and Vicodin, in a family of drugs called opioids - chemically similar to opium.

The study was published online Monday in JAMA Internal Medicine.

Paulozzi said overall prevalence of nonmedical use of prescription opioid painkillers has held steady in recent years, at about 12 million, or 1 in 20 people aged 12 and older.

But previous CDC data show overdose deaths involving these drugs more than tripled from 1999 to 2010, with more than 16,000 deaths that year. By contrast, overdose deaths that involved heroin and cocaine to-

taled less than 8,000, and deaths that involved often-abused prescription drugs that include anti-anxiety medication totaled about 6,500.

A separate study in the same journal presents Tennessee—among states hardest hit by prescription drug abuse—as a snapshot of the problem. From 2007 through 2011, one-third of Tennessee's population filled an opioid prescription each year, the study found. Nearly 8 percent had used more than four prescribers and these abusers were more than six times more likely to have fatal overdoses than the least frequent users.

Sunken Great Lakes oil pipeline raises spill fears

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP)—A freshwater channel that separates Michigan's upper and lower peninsulas is a premier Midwestern tourist attraction and a photographer's delight, offering spectacular vistas of two Great Lakes, several islands and one of the world's longest suspension bridges.

But nowadays the Straits of Mackinac is drawing attention for something that is out of sight and usually out of mind, and which some consider a symbol

of the dangers lurking in the nation's sprawling web of buried oil and natural gas pipelines.

Stretched across the bottom of the waterway at depths reaching 270 feet are two 20-inch pipes that carry nearly 23 million gallons of crude oil daily. They are part of the 1,900-mile Lakehead network, which originates in North Dakota near the Canadian border. A segment known as Line 5 slices through northern Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula before ducking beneath the

Straits of Mackinac and winding up in Sarnia, Ontario.

The pipes were laid in 1953. They've never leaked, according to the system's owner, Enbridge Energy Partners LP, which says the lines are in good shape and pose no threat.

But a growing chorus of activists and members of Congress is demanding closer scrutiny as stepped-up production in North Dakota's Bakken region and Canada's Alberta tar sands boosts the amount of oil cours-

ing through pipelines crossing the nation's heartland.

Concern has risen in the past year following serious spills in Arkansas and North Dakota, and as the government weighs the proposed Keystone pipeline project that would stretch from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. The issue is especially sensitive in Michigan, where another Enbridge line ruptured in 2010, spewing more than 840,000 gallons of crude into the Kalamazoo River and a tributary creek.

ACROSS THE NATION

Pentagon suspends military engagements with Russia

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Pentagon says it is suspending exercises and other activities with the Russian military, in light of Moscow's military involvement in Ukraine. A Pentagon spokesman, Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby, said Monday evening that the U.S. military has "put on hold" all military-to-military engagements, including bilateral meetings, port visits and planning conferences. Kirby said the Pentagon values the relationship it has developed with the Russian military in the last few years, to reduce the risk of military miscalculation. He said the U.S. calls on Russian forces in the Crimea region of Ukraine to return to their bases.

Air Force Academy investigates possible cheating

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. (AP)—The Air Force Academy is investigating whether 40 freshman cadets cheated in a chemistry class. Academy officials said Monday some cadets possibly copied portions of a lab report assignment. The school says about 500 cadets are enrolled in the

class. Initial reports said 11 cadets were under investigation, but the academy said later it was 40. Lt. Gen. Michelle D. Johnson, the academy superintendent, says she is disappointed by the allegations.

First 2 Corvettes lifted by crane from Ky sinkhole

Two classic Corvettes re-emerged Monday from a giant sinkhole that gobbled up those and six other prized vehicles still trapped beneath the National Corvette Museum in Kentucky. Workers in a cage painstakingly hooked straps around the cars before a crane slowly hoisted them one by one from the enormous pit that opened up last month. Onlookers cheered after each car was rescued, but the joy was more subdued for the second car, which had more extensive damage. The first car hoisted out—a 2009 ZR1 Blue Devil—showed only minor damage that included cracks on lower door panels, a busted window and an oil line rupture that oozed oil, said Chevrolet spokesman Monte Doran. Workers were able to get that car running. Cheers went up as the engine revved at the Bowling Green museum. (AP)

Asia

China captures 3 more suspects in station attack

BEIJING (AP)—Police have captured the three remaining suspects in a slashing rampage at a train station in south-western China that killed 29 people, state media said Monday.

Authorities say the attack in Kunming city that also wounded 143 was carried out by separatists from the far-western region of Xinjiang.

Clashes in Xinjiang between authorities and ethnic Uighurs over the past year have left scores dead, but the assault Saturday evening occurred more than 1,500 kilometers (900 miles) to the southeast in Yunnan province, which has not had a history of such unrest.

Citing a statement from the Ministry of Public Security, the official Xinhua News Agency said a “terrorist gang” of six men and two women led by a person identified as Abdurehim Kurban was responsible for the attack.

Xinhua said police shot and killed four of the attackers, who used knives to slash at crowds of people, and captured an injured female suspect at the scene.

The brief Xinhua report did not identify the ethnicity of the eight or say how the final three suspects were identified and captured.

Xinjiang is home to a simmering rebellion against Chinese rule by some members of the Muslim Uighur (pronounced WEE’-gur) population, and the government has responded there



Relatives and friends of a victim killed in Saturday night's attack wait to see the victim's body outside a funeral home in Kunming, in southwestern China's Yunnan province, Monday, March 3, 2014.

with heavy-handed security.

Another unprecedented attack attributed by authorities to Uighurs occurred last October in Beijing. Three assailants and two tourists were killed in the attack at Tiananmen Gate.

In Washington, the State Department said it did not have any independent information about the identity or the motivation of the attackers.

Spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Monday that based on information report-

ed by Chinese media, the violence in Kunming “appears to be an act of terrorism targeting random members of the public.” She said the U.S. deplores violence directed at innocent civilians, regardless of the cause.

Businesses resume after Thai protests scaled back

BANGKOK (AP)—Thailand's political crisis is far from resolved, but Bangkok had at least one reason to breathe a temporary sigh of relief Monday: Major intersections barricaded by the protesters reopened to traffic for the first time in six weeks.

That's good news for businesses—including those that support the demonstrators, and for drivers who have faced blocked roads and traffic even more snarled than usual during the occupation of half a dozen of the capital's major arteries.

“I'm really glad they moved out,” said Rattanaorn Intarit, who owns a boutique selling nightgowns and women's clothes at Siam Square, a vibrant commercial and shopping area in the city center. “I don't care why they did it, but I'm just glad they're gone and I hope the economy will be better.”

The protesters have struggled unsuccessfully for months to force Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra to step down and make way for an unelected council to institute anti-corruption reforms. Sporadic violence has killed 23 people and injured more than 700, and

over the last several weeks, protest sites had been attacked almost daily.

On Monday, two grenades were thrown at the Criminal Court's building in northern Bangkok but no one was injured, according to court officials.

So far, the army—which has staged 11 coups since the end of absolute monarchy in 1932 and is seen as sympathetic to the demonstrators—has shown little appetite for intervening. Most believe the real battles will now take place in court.

Yingluck faces several legal challenges that could force her from office, and has to contend with a judiciary which has a record of hostility toward her and her political allies.

Last week, Thailand's anti-graft commission began proceedings to charge Yingluck with negligence for allegedly mishandling a government rice subsidy program. Yingluck could eventually face impeachment by the Senate or criminal charges if the National Anti-Corruption Commission delivers a final ruling against her.

Although protesters are still blocking the roads near Yingluck's office at

Government House, and a stretch of road leading to a government office complex in northern Bangkok, they began packing up Sunday to leave several other major intersections.

On Monday, the city center reopened for traffic, with cars and pedestrians moving into areas once barricaded with sandbag walls and steel gates that were patrolled by self-appointed protest guards who searched vehicles and bags of those passing by.

The dwindling number of demonstrators moved their to central Bangkok's Lumpini Park, turning what was once a beautiful urban green space into a sea of tents.

Rattanaorn said the impact from the current round of street demonstrations was “the worst” he had seen since he opened his shop 11 years ago. Thailand's capital has suffered repeated bouts of unrest and mass protests since a 2006 coup ousted Yingluck's brother, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

But Rattanaorn said this time, it would take a while for businesses to recover.

“Customers, especially the foreigners,

are not returning yet at this point,” he said. “It's going to take some time before it became lively around here again. Still, it feels good to see cars running outside and coming in to Siam Square.”

Sri Somdee, 60, who sells school uniforms near MBK, a shopping mall that is popular among both Thais and foreign tourists, said she was “very relieved” protesters were gone.

“I know they are fighting for their cause but they were bringing businesses down with them,” he said.

The Bangkok Mass Transit Authority, which operates the public city buses, announced it was resuming normal service on 21 bus routes after having lost 94 million baht (\$2.88 million), or about 21 percent of regular revenue since January. Another 20 routes are still disrupted by dotted protest encampments across the city.

On Monday, an alliance of seven private sector organizations, including the Federation of Thai Industries, a major bankers' association and the Tourism Council of Thailand, said they were in favor of negotiations between the protesters and the government in order to end the conflict and the “severe” damage to the economy.

with officials stationed there throughout the spring climbing season that begins in March and ends in May. They will offer help to climbers and resolve any problems between climbers and monitor the garbage situation.

Last year, a brawl between Western climbers and their Nepalese guides on the mountain sparked safety concerns.

Nepal officials say the rules will protect the environment, better manage climbers and increase their safety, especially as their numbers grow.

Nepal has eight of the 14 highest mountains in the world.

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP)—Mt. Everest climbing season began this week with new rules that require climbers to bring down their personal garbage, and more security officials at the mountain's base camp to help climbers.

Tourism Ministry official Maddhu Sudan Burlakoti said individual climbers going beyond the base camp will be required to bring down at least eight kilograms (17.6 pounds) of their personal garbage and hand it over to officials stationed there.

It is in the latest attempt from the Nepalese government to clean up

New rules as Everest climbing season begins

the world's highest mountain, which draws hundreds of Western climbers and a steady income for the local and national economy, and produces lots of garbage. Until now, climbing teams were asked to bring down their trash or risk losing a \$4,000 deposit—which wasn't very effective as this wasn't widely enforced.

More than 4,000 climbers have scaled the 8,850-meter (29,035-foot) summit since it was conquered in 1953 by Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa guide Tenz-

ing Norgay. Over the years, climbers have left tons of garbage on the slopes on the mountain, and some have called it the “world's highest garbage dump.”

Burlakoti said officials posted at the base camp would check climbers to make sure that each brings down food wrappings, tents, ropes, clothes, crampons, pegs and gas cans. It was not clear how climbers failing to comply would be punished.

The government is also opening up a contact office tent at the base camp

ASIAN BRIEFS

PH gunmen abduct 2 children, nanny, driver

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Gunmen abducted two children, their nanny and a driver while on the way to school Monday in a southern Philippine region notorious for ransom kidnappings by Islamic militants, military officials said. The driver and nanny were taking a 10-year-old boy and his 8-year-old cousin to school when about five men with M16 rifles in a jeep bumped their van and dragged the four away in Jolo town in Sulu province, marine Capt. Ryan Lacuesta said. The abduction alarmed school officials and parents in the poor, predominantly Muslim province, Lacuesta said. Abu Sayyaf extremists and small kidnap gangs were among the suspects. “This is really condemnable because they targeted this time innocent children, who may not be able to withstand such a situation and the trauma,” Lacuesta said.

PH claims record in organ donor pledges

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippines has broken India's record of gathering the most organ donor pledges in an hour at a single site, health officials said Friday. The feat awaits the Guinness World Records' official confirmation. Health Assistant Secretary Eric Tayag said the campaign gathered 3,548 pledges at an event held at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines' Manila campus, beating India's previous record of 2,755.

At the event, aimed at raising awareness about organ donation, volunteers filled out forms with a checklist of organs they are willing to donate upon death. Those forms were then checked and recorded by organizers. “We have a lot of countrymen who are in dire need of organs and this is part of the goal of the Department of Health to remove the stigma attached to donating organs,” Tayag said.

Australia to comply with East Timor court orders

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Australia will comply by an International Court of Justice ruling banning it from using documents the government seized from a lawyer working for East Timor in an arbitration case over a multibillion-dollar oil and gas deal between the countries, the attorney general said Tuesday. The United Nations' highest court in The Hague on Monday ordered Canberra not to “interfere in any way in communications” between East Timor and its legal advisers in the arbitration or future negotiations on a maritime boundary between resources-rich Australia and its tiny, impoverished northern neighbor. Attorney-General George Brandis said in a statement that his government “is pleased” with the court's refusal of East Timor's request that the documents be handed back.

World

Russia sets Ukraine agenda with diplomacy, threats

KIEV, Ukraine (AP)—Russian troops said to be 16,000 strong tightened their stranglehold on Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula Monday, openly defying the U.S. and the European Union and rattling world capitals and stock markets.

The West struggled to find a way to get Russia to back down, but with little beyond already threatened diplomatic and economic sanctions, global markets fell sharply over the prospect of violent upheaval in the heart of Europe.

For its part, Moscow reiterated its price for ending the crisis: restoration of a deal reached with the opposition less than two weeks ago to form a national unity government in Kiev that represents pro-Russian as well as Ukrainian interests, with new elections to be held by December.

Ukraine, meanwhile, accused Russia of piracy for blocking two of the besieged country's warships and ordering them to surrender or be seized.

The U.S. originally estimated that 6,000 Russian troops were dispatched to Crimea, but Ukraine's mission to the United Nations said Monday that 16,000 had been deployed. That stoked fears that the Kremlin might carry out more land grabs



The handout image provided by the United Nations shows UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, right, in a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in the margin of the 25th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, March 3, 2014.

in pro-Russian eastern Ukraine.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry was headed to Kiev in an expression of support for Ukraine's sovereignty, and the EU threatened a raft of punitive measures as it called an emergency summit for Thursday. The Pentagon said it was suspending exercises and other activities with the Russian military, and a senior U.S. official

said the U.S. would not move forward with meetings designed to deepen the trade relationship between the two countries. Lacking authorization to speak publicly about the trade meetings, the official requested anonymity.

But it was Russia that appeared to be driving the agenda. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a U.N. Human

Rights Council session in Geneva that Ukraine should return to an agreement signed last month by pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich—but not Moscow—to hold early elections and surrender some powers. Yanukovich fled the country after sealing the pact with the opposition and foreign ministers of France, Germany and Poland.

"Instead of a promised national unity government," Lavrov said of the fledgling new administration in Kiev, "a government of the victors has been created."

The latest flashpoint came when Ukrainian authorities said Russian troops had issued an ultimatum for two of the besieged country's warships to surrender or be seized.

"I call on the leadership of the Russian Federation. Stop

Crisis escalates

Secretary of State John Kerry has made plans to visit Kiev as part of the Obama administration strategy to increase the diplomatic and economic pressure on Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin is sending more troops to Ukraine, which has mobilized its armed forces.



Latest events

- Crimea's airports and military bases under Russian control
- Ukrainian PM says Russian actions are "a declaration of war"
- U.S. estimates there are 6,000 Russian ground and naval forces in the region

Source: ESRI, Chicago Tribune, BBC, AP

Impacts

- Russian stock prices have fallen and the ruble has hit a new low against the dollar
- Russia's G8 partners have condemned Moscow's military build-up in Ukraine; leaders have withdrawn from preparations for June summit in Sochi

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the aggression, stop the provocations, stop the piracy! These are crimes, and you will be called to account for them," said acting Ukrainian President Oleksandr Turchynov. "The commanders and crews are ready to defend their ships. They are defending Ukraine," Turchynov said in a televised address to the nation after a military spokesman said Ukraine's corvette Ternopil and command ship Slavutych were being

blocked by four Russian navy ships in the Crimean port of Sevastopol.

Vladimir Anikin, a Russian defense ministry spokesman, dismissed the accusation as nonsense but refused to elaborate.

In Washington, the State Department warned of a "dangerous escalation" and said the U.S. would hold Moscow directly accountable for any threat to Ukraine's navy.

US, Europeans try to rally Western front vs Russia

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. and major allies strained on Monday to rally a strong Western front to persuade Russia to step back from a military takeover of Ukraine's strategic Crimea region. But several acknowledged there are few options beyond already-threatened economic and diplomatic penalties, and critics said administration efforts were too little, too late after years of pressing for friendlier relations with Moscow.

A stern-faced President Barack Obama labeled the Russian advance in Crimea a violation of international law. He urged Congress to approve an aid package for the Ukrainian government, and repeated earlier threats that the U.S. would take steps to hobble Russia's economy and isolate it diplomatically if President Vladimir Putin does not back down.

The Pentagon announced late Monday it was suspending engagements with the Russian military, and a senior U.S. official said the U.S. would not move forward with meetings designed to deepen the trade relationship between the two countries. Lacking authorization to speak publicly about the trade meetings, the official requested anonymity.

Obama met Monday eve-

ning with his national security team, including Secretary of State John Kerry and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, to discuss Ukraine. Hours later Kerry was to leave for Kiev to reinforce U.S. support for the new Ukrainian government that only weeks ago ousted its pro-Russian president.

But French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said Russia's control of Crimea would not be easy to reverse. And the suggestions he offered—sending in observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation, questioning Russia's membership in the G-8 economic group and holding out for a diplomatic dialogue proposed by Germany—were an indication of how limited the options were for the U.S. and Europe.

Still, alternately threatening and cajoling Putin, Western leaders pointed to the damage that his nation's natural gas, uranium and coal industries could suffer if sanctions cut off exports to the European Union, its largest customer.

Britain's prime minister warned of diplomatic, political, economic "and other pressures" that could be brought against Moscow. And the European Union's foreign ministers issued a Thursday dead-

line for Putin to pull back his troops or face a rejection of visa-liberalization and economic cooperation negotiations that have long been in the works.

"I think the situation is relatively clear, you need to see a return to barracks," EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said in Brussels, where ministers also froze preparations for the Group of Eight summit of major economies that is set for June in Sochi.

In Washington, Obama declared, "The strong condemnation that has proceeded from countries around the world indicates the degree to which Russia is on the wrong side of history."

"So there are really two paths that Russia can take at this point," Obama said. "Over time, this will be a costly proposition for Russia, and now is the time for them to consider whether they can serve their interests in a way that resorts to diplomacy as opposed to force."

The White House said Obama met for more than two hours Monday night with the National Security Council and the other cabinet members, discussing what steps the United States can take with international partners to further isolate Russia and persuade them to de-escalate the situation.

Obama: Tough choices nearing in Mideast talks

WASHINGTON (AP)—Seeking to salvage an elusive Middle East peace plan, President Barack Obama pressed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Monday to make the "tough decisions" needed to move forward on talks with the Palestinians.

But facing a U.S.-imposed April deadline, the Israeli leader declared pessimistically that, "Israel has been doing its part and, I regret to say, the Palestinians have not." Netanyahu's comments underscored the slim prospects of reaching an agreement to the long-running conflict, despite a robust effort led by Secretary of State John Kerry.

Obama and Netanyahu spoke before an Oval Office meeting on a snowy Monday in Washington. The meeting marked a more direct foray into the peace negotiations by Obama, who will also meet at the White

House later this month with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

"It is still possible to create two states, a Jewish state of Israel and a state of Palestine, with people living side by side in peace and security," Obama said. "But it's difficult. It requires compromise on all sides."

While the relationship between Obama and Netanyahu has improved after early tensions, the two leaders still grapple with deep differences, particularly on Iran. Israel sees Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat and fears Tehran is using U.S.-led negotiations to stall while it builds a bomb.

Obama, seeking to reassure Netanyahu, affirmed his "absolute commitment that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon."

Netanyahu insisted Monday that Iran must suspend all uranium enrichment, though any final deal between the inter-

national community and Iran would likely leave the Islamic republic with a small enrichment capacity.

"No country has a greater stake in this," said Netanyahu, who is in Washington to speak at the annual meeting of AIPAC, the largest pro-Israel lobby.

Obama, who has twice addressed the conference, is not speaking this year, though Kerry was scheduled to speak Monday night.

In excerpts released ahead of his speech, Kerry outlined what he called "the endgame" in the peace negotiations. He said a peace deal must include security arrangements that leave Israel more secure, mutual recognition of states for the Jewish and Palestinian people, an end to all conflict, a just solution for Palestinian refugees, and an resolution "that finally allows Jerusalem to live up to its name as the city of peace."

Focus

MOSCOW (AP)—President Vladimir Putin knows there is little the West can do to get him to reverse his mobilization in Crimea, or to stop him from sending additional troops into other parts of Ukraine. But trade sanctions against Russia could be painful, and there are ways for him to get what he wants—keeping Ukraine from slipping out of his grasp—without ratcheting up the military pressure.

The plan Russia pushed Monday calls on Ukrainian politicians to return to their earlier agreement to form a government of national unity. Importantly, the presidential election under that scenario would be held in December and not in May, as the government formed by victorious protesters has planned.

This would buy the Kremlin time. In the coming months the Ukrainian economy could go into free fall, with the West helpless to stop it. There would be new pressure within Ukraine to turn to Russia. A similar thing happened when Ukrainians grew weary of the pro-Western leaders swept into power by the 2004 Orange Revolution.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called on Ukraine to return to a Feb. 21 agreement between Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and his opponents just before Yanukovich fled to Russia and his opponents named a new government. Ironically, that agreement received the blessings of the West, but not Russia, at the time. Lavrov said representatives of Russia-friendly Ukrainian regions should be brought into the new government.

“Instead of a promised national unity government, a ‘government of the victors’ has been created,” he said at U.N. meetings in Geneva.

This has been the position of the Kremlin all along, but now it is negotiating from a position of strength.

Russia has taken control of Crimea, a Ukrainian peninsula where the Russian Black Sea Fleet is based. Russian troops controlled all Ukrainian border posts and all military bases on Monday.

Putin also has left open the option of sending troops into eastern and southern Ukraine, where many ethnic Russians live. “We are talking about protection of our citizens and compatriots,” Lavrov said Monday.

This has raised fears in Kiev and the

West that Russia will annex these regions as well.

The current instability plays into Moscow’s hand by making it more difficult for the new government to persuade the International Monetary Fund to provide the billions of dollars in loans that Ukraine needs to avoid default. An IMF delegation was to arrive in Kiev on Tuesday.

Putin cannot afford for Russia to cede influence over Ukraine to the West. The country of 46 million people is an important trade partner, holds pipelines that carry Russian natural gas to Europe and is central to his ambitions of restoring Moscow’s influence over much of the former Soviet Union. The Crimean Peninsula is of particular importance, both strategically and sentimentally.

For Russians, Ukraine is part of their history and their faith, and family ties run deep. Ukraine, which became independent with the 1991 Soviet collapse, has always seemed like an artificial state to many Russians, including Putin.

Since three months of protests, which included elements of Ukrainian nationalism, drove the Moscow-supported government out of Kiev, Russian state television has portrayed Ukraine as under threat from “fascists” supported by the West. If Putin were to back down now, Russians would see it as his failure.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said world leaders “are prepared to go to the hilt in order to isolate Russia.”

Putin is unlikely to be too worried about a threat to kick Russia out of the Group of Eight leading industrial countries, even though he was set to host the next summit in June. He skipped the summit hosted by President Barack Obama in 2012.

Kerry’s warning of possible visa



Russian President Vladimir Putin, center, and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, left, and the commander of the Western Military District Anatoly Sidorov, right, walk upon arrival to watch military exercise near St. Petersburg, Russia, Monday, March 3, 2014. AP

Invasion of Ukraine isn't Putin's only option

bans, asset freezes and penalties on trade and investment, however, may have gotten Putin’s attention and most certainly alarmed many of the wealthy businessmen in his circle.

Kerry made clear that if Russia stood down, the U.S. would work with Ukraine’s government to make sure

Russian interests in Crimea were respected and the naval base was allowed to remain.

“We believe there are many alternatives before you get to an invasion, and none of those have been tried at this point in time,” Kerry said Sunday on ABC television. He was due in Ukraine

on Tuesday to meet with the new government.

While Putin most likely is relishing Russia’s ability to strike fear in Kiev and world capitals, Lavrov’s statements suggest he might be willing to make a deal that could serve him better in the long run.

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia has effectively seized control of Ukraine’s strategic Crimean peninsula without firing a shot, but many in Ukraine and elsewhere fear the Kremlin might follow up by sending troops into Russian-speaking regions of eastern Ukraine. Such a move could trigger open hostilities between the Russian and Ukrainian militaries. Here’s a look at the two forces:

RED ARMY HEIRS

Both militaries are the successors of the Soviet army and have inherited its arsenals, structure and tactics. Ukraine surrendered its share of Soviet nuclear arsenals to Russia in the early 1990s.

The Russian military is much bigger, at 1 million men, compared to Ukraine’s 180,000. The Ukrainian military has an estimated 200 combat aircraft and about 1,100 tanks, while Russia reportedly has about 1,400 combat aircraft and several thousand tanks.

Russia and Ukraine divided the So-

A look at Russian, Ukrainian militaries

viet Black Sea Fleet after the 1991 Soviet collapse. However, Ukraine has struggled to maintain its share of the fleet and has just a few combat-ready ships, far outnumbered by the Russian navy, which has a lease of the Crimean port of Sevastopol until 2042.

UNEQUAL OPPONENTS

The Russian military has undergone a major modernization in recent years, receiving large supplies of new weapons and conducting massive exercises. Cash-strapped Ukraine couldn’t afford such a buildup and its forces have slowly degraded.

In addition to the funding shortage, the Ukrainian military’s readiness was hurt by last year’s decision by President Viktor Yanukovich to end conscription and turn the military into a volunteer force. The last wave of conscripts is half way through its one-year

term, and their morale could be low. The new Ukrainian government has tried to call up some reservists, but it’s unclear whether that will work.

The Russian military has largely recovered from its post-Soviet meltdown, and it recently has run a series of war games unseen since the Cold War times. An exercise involving 150,000 troops, hundreds of tanks and dozens of combat planes has been launched across western Russia just as Russian forces overtook Crimea. President Vladimir Putin attended the maneuvers Monday at a shooting range near St. Petersburg.

DIVIDED LOYALTIES

Ukraine’s loyalties have been sharply divided between the Russian-speaking east and south, where people favor close ties with Moscow, and the west, where residents want to integrate more

closely with the European Union.

Ukraine’s armed forces reflect that divide. Units stationed in Russian-speaking regions are mostly manned by local residents who don’t necessarily support the new government in Kiev. That raises doubts about their loyalties in case of a military conflict with Russia.

The Ukrainian military’s reluctance to confront the Russians became obvious in Crimea, where a newly-named Ukrainian navy chief went over to the pro-Russian local government, a day after his appointment. Regional officials say that thousands of Ukrainian servicemen have done the same, but that claim can’t be independently confirmed.

TENSE STANDOFF IN CRIMEA

Forces of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet based in Crimea and additional Russian

troops sent to the peninsula have seized or blocked Ukrainian air bases, air defense missile batteries and other military facilities, and garrisons throughout the region. Ukraine’s military acknowledged that “practically all” of its military facilities in Crimea have been surrounded or taken over.

A ferry crossing linking Crimea with Russia has been overtaken by Russian forces, which would allow a quick military buildup in Crimea, if Russia chooses to do so. A narrow strip of land linking the peninsula with mainland Ukraine also has been sealed by armed people.

The Ukrainian military said Russia has recently brought four navy ships from other seas to the Crimean port of Sevastopol.

The Russians have demanded that Ukrainian soldiers in Crimea lay down their weapons. Some have agreed and left or joined pro-Russia forces. But others have refused and barricaded themselves at their bases.

Campus Life

School invites Limtiaco to talk about bullying



Fifth grade students listen to U.S. Attorney Alicia Limtiaco.

USAO

U.S. Attorney Alicia A.G. Limtiaco, Districts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, was invited to speak on Jan. 31, 2014, with approximately 75 fifth grade students at Harry S. Truman Elementary School, about bullying and cyberbullying, including the dangers and tragic consequences of bullying and cyberbullying, and ways to keep safe.

These students also graduated from the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program in November 2013. The

GREAT Program's primary objective is to raise awareness about and prevent delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership. The GREAT lessons taught by GREAT certified law enforcement officers and aimed at elementary and middle school students, focus on developing life skills to help students avoid delinquent behavior and violence, and learn to solve problems through communication and the exercise of good judgment. (USAO)



U.S. Attorney Alicia Limtiaco at Harry S. Truman Elementary School.

USAO



ZONING DONATION

Kagman High School acting principal Leila Staffler, right, receives the generous donation of supplies from Commonwealth Zoning Board, as presented here by zoning planner Maryann Borja-Arriola, during their public education outreach on Nov. 7, 2013.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



MATH OLYMPIAD

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

During the Math Olympiads held on Nov. 9, 2013, at Hopwood Junior High School, Hopwood registered about 90 students and got 13 ribbons. The winners of the first and second meet qualified for the Regional Meet. Twenty-six Hopwood students advanced to the Regional Meet where they competed with other 74 public and private school middle school students. Photo shows Hopwood's Math Olympiads Team 2013-2014.

Life & Style

Ellen's Oscar celeb selfie a landmark media moment



This image released by Ellen DeGeneres shows actors front row from left, Jared Leto, Jennifer Lawrence, Meryl Streep, Ellen DeGeneres, Bradley Cooper, Peter Nyong'o Jr., and, second row, from left, Channing Tatum, Julia Roberts, Kevin Spacey, Brad Pitt, Lupita Nyong'o and Angelina Jolie as they pose for a "selfie" portrait on a cell phone during the Oscars at the Dolby Theatre on Sunday, March 2, 2014, in Los Angeles.

By **DAVID BAUDER**
AP TELEVISION WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Ellen DeGeneres' celeb-studded selfie from the most-watched Oscars telecast in a decade was a landmark social media moment at a time online conversation is boosting television viewership and vice versa.

It's also a murky example of what is or isn't product placement in a hyper-marketed world. Would the world's most retweeted photo have been shot by an iPhone if Samsung hadn't been a commercial sponsor of the Academy Awards?

An estimated 43 million people watched "12 Years a Slave" win the Oscar for best picture on Sunday night. It was the most-watched Academy Awards since 2004, when "Lord of the Rings: Return of the King" was the best picture. And it was the most popular entertainment event on TV since the "Friends" finale that year. The Oscars are generally the most-watched TV event of the year after the Super Bowl.

Oscar night was also big for Jimmy Kimmel. The ABC late-night star drew just under 7 million viewers for his post-Oscars special, the biggest audience he's ever gotten on ABC, despite starting at 12:42 a.m. on the East Coast.

The ratings provide further evidence of how big event programming is a growth engine for broadcast networks, in large part because of fans watching the event and conversing with friends on tablets and smartphones. Twitter said that some 14.7 million tweets mentioning the Oscars or prominent actors and films were sent out during the Sunday night telecast, and Facebook said there were 25.4 million interactions about the show.

Social media was clearly a

driving force Sunday and is why live events on networks "have become basically the currency," co-producer Neil Meron told The Associated Press.

"What it's all about right now is creating a conversation, and social media allows for the conversation as it's happening," he said.

No social media moment was bigger than when host DeGeneres briefly caused Twitter to crash after going into the audience and asking Bradley Cooper to take a picture with several other stars crowding around. Besides Cooper and DeGeneres, Meryl Streep, Jennifer Lawrence, Kevin Spacey, Julia Roberts, Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt also crowded into the frame. She asked viewers to help her set a retweet record, and they quickly complied.

By Monday afternoon, it had been retweeted some 2.8 million times, shattering the previous record of 810,000 retweets for the photo of President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama hugging after the 2012 election. Twitter was humming at 254,644 tweets per minute after DeGeneres' request, and the company said the crush disrupted service for 20 minutes.

DeGeneres handed a Samsung device to Cooper to take the selfie. Since the Oscars host's Twitter posts from backstage included shots from an iPhone, Samsung doesn't seem to be her usual smartphone of choice.

Samsung, however, was a big presence at the Oscars besides being a commercial sponsor. The company gave its phones to student presenters and encouraged them to tweet and post on Instagram with them. Dozens of Samsung phones, tablets and TVs were used to make a digital photo display in the backstage green room.

ABC said Samsung did not pay specifically for use of the camera in DeGeneres' selfie segment and the company wasn't explicitly named on the air as the stunt unfolded, but it is a noticeably larger device than an iPhone. Spokeswoman Nicole Marostica said once producers decided to do the segment, it made more sense to use a Samsung product because the company was an Oscars sponsor.

"They were just lucky beneficiaries of the whole thing," Marostica said.

Samsung said Monday that it was donating \$1.5 million each to DeGeneres' favorite charities, St. Jude's and the Humane Society. The company, in a statement, did not directly address its role in seeing that its phone got the starring role.

"Ellen was given a choice of what she wanted to do," said Oscars co-producer Craig Zadan. "One moment she wanted to do the iPhone, the next moment the Samsung. I think it was nothing except it was an arbitrary last-minute decision, let's go with the Samsung. Believe me, everything was given a lot of thought. The telephone was not given any thought."

Even more spontaneous was that galaxy of stars surrounding Ellen in the selfie shot. It was just supposed to be Streep, Zadan said. "I don't think that Ellen even knew that all of those

other stars would get out of their seats and jump in and be in the picture," he said.

Use of the Samsung phone "is a wonderful example of product placement," said Tim Calkins, marketing professor at the Kellogg School of Business at Northwestern University.

"It worked because it's not a formal placement," Calkins said. "The best product placements seem natural and this seemed natural."

Samsung is the worldwide leader in smartphones but trails Apple in the United States, and the company has been aggressively going after the U.S. market.

Oddly, the audience snapshot wasn't a new element for DeGeneres. When she hosted the Oscars in 2007, she went into the audience and asked filmmaker Steven Spielberg to snap a picture of her with Clint Eastwood, saying she wanted to use it on Myspace.

Twitter said that most tweeted-about star on Oscar night was Jennifer Lawrence, with Brad Pitt coming in second. "Gravity" was the movie that was the subject of the most tweets during the show, followed by "Frozen."

A total of 11.3 million people commented on the award via Facebook, the company said. The busiest commenters were women aged 18 to 34, Facebook said, and the one moment that drew the most attention was when "12 Years a Slave" won the award for best picture.

Jared Leto had his TiVo moment Sunday night. The company said the clip of Leto's acting in "Dallas Buyers Club" was a moment when viewers paused their digital video recorders and rewound to see something again more than at any other point in the show.

Diversity the big winner at the Academy Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Diversity was perhaps the biggest winner at the 86th annual Academy Awards.

For the first time, a film directed by a black filmmaker—Steve McQueen of "12 Years a Slave"—won best picture and a Latino—Alfonso Cuarón of "Gravity"—took home best director in a ceremony presided over by a lesbian host and overseen by the academy's first black president. And only two of the top six awards went to Americans.

McQueen's grimly historical drama "12 Years a Slave" took best picture, leading the usually sedate filmmaker to jump up and down in celebration after his acceptance speech.

The British director dedicated his award to "all of the people who endured slavery and the 21 million people who still suffer slavery today."

Cuarón's lost-in-space thriller "Gravity" led the Oscars with seven awards, including cinematography, editing, score, visual effects, sound mixing and sound editing. Some in his native Mexico have been critical that since the attention came for a Hollywood release and not a Mexican-themed film, his win didn't have the same kind of importance.

"I'm Mexican so I hope some Mexicans were rooting for me," he told reporters backstage.

The entire Oscar ceremony had the feel of a make-over for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences—an institution that has sometimes seemed stuck in the past. After a Los Angeles Times report revealed the academy was overwhelming older white men, new president Cheryl Boone Isaacs has pushed for a more varied membership.

The movie industry that the Oscars reflect has also been reluctant to tell a wider range of stories.

"Dallas Buyers Club," the best picture-nominated drama about AIDS in 1980s Texas, took two decades to get made after countless executives balked at financing such a tale. Matthew McConaughey and Jared Leto, the two Americans in the top six awards, took best actor and best supporting actor titles for their roles in the film as a heterosexual rodeo rat (McConaughey) and a transgender drug addict (Leto) united by HIV.

"Thirty-six million people who have lost the battle to AIDS and to those of you out there who have ever felt injustice because of who you are or who you love, tonight I stand here in front of the world with you and for you," said Leto in his acceptance speech.

Cate Blanchett, the Australian best-actress winner for her bitter, ruined socialite in Woody Allen's "Blue Jasmine," used her acceptance speech to trumpet the need to make films with female leads—films like her own and like "Gravity," starring Sandra Bullock. A study by analyst Kevin B. Lee found that last year's lead actors averaged 100 minutes on screen, but lead actresses averaged only 49 minutes.

"To the audiences who went to see the film and perhaps those of us in the industry who are still foolishly clinging to the idea that female films, with women at the center, are niche experiences, they are not," said Blanchett. "Audiences want to see them and, in fact, they earn money."

"12 Years a Slave" also won awards in the writing and acting categories. John Ridley picked up the trophy for best adapted screenplay, which was based on the 1853 memoir by Solomon Northup. The screenwriter is only the second black writer (Geoffrey Fletcher won for "Precious" in 2009) to win in the category. Backstage, the "12 Years" team mentioned their efforts to include Solomon Northup's memoir as part of high school study. The National School Boards Association announced in February that the book is now mandatory reading.

"It's important that we understand our history so we can understand who we were and who we are now and most importantly who we're going to be," said Brad Pitt, who produced "12 Years." "We hope that this film remains a gentle reminder that we're all equal. We all want the same: Dignity and opportunity."

Lupita Nyong'o was a first-time Oscar winner for her supporting role as field slave Patsey in "12 Years." "I'm a little dazed," said Nyong'o backstage. "I can't believe this is real life."

Nyong'o is the sixth black actress to win in the supporting actress category—and the first major Oscar win for Kenya (the president of Kenya congratulated her in a tweet)—following Hattie McDaniel ("Gone with the Wind"), Whoopi Goldberg ("Ghost"), Jennifer Hudson ("Dreamgirls"), Mo'Nique ("Precious") and Octavia Spencer ("The Help").

Jared Leto's latest transformation pays off in a big way

By OLIVER GETTELL
and STEVEN ZEITCHIK
LOS ANGELES TIMES

HOLLYWOOD—For his performance as the transgender AIDS patient Rayon in “Dallas Buyers Club,” Jared Leto essentially became a different person. He dropped more than 30 pounds, adopted a lilting accent and stayed in character for the entirety of the nearly monthlong shoot, clacking around in high heels, short skirts and garish makeup.

On Sunday, Leto won his first Oscar for the role, which marked the biggest transformation in a career marked by reinvention; it also represented a return to roots for an actor who for several years was more likely to be found onstage with his rock band than in front of a camera.

Leto has looked strikingly different for each of his signature roles—and throughout his triumphant march through awards season. He wore a man bun at the Golden Globes, let his tresses down for the Screen Actors Guild Awards, donned a gold blazer at the Oscar nominee luncheon, went rocker-chic in a leather jacket at the Spirit Awards, and slipped into a white tux for the Oscars.

Accepting his Oscar, Leto paid tribute to his mother, Constance, a “high school dropout and a single mom” from Bossier City, La.; his older brother and band mate, Shannon; his fellow nominees; and the people of conflict-torn Venezuela and Ukraine. He then dedicated his award to “the 36 million people who have lost the battle to AIDS” and added, “To those of you who have ever felt injustice because of who you are or who you love, tonight I stand here in front of the world with you and for you.”



Jared Leto accepts the award for best actor in a supporting role for “Dallas Buyers Club” during the Oscars at the Dolby Theatre on Sunday, March 2, 2014, in Los Angeles.

Leto, 42, had his breakthrough role playing the brooding teen heartthrob Jordan Catalano opposite Claire Danes in the ABC series “My So-Called Life,” which ran for a single season from 1994 to ‘95. Though short-lived, the show was well reviewed and gained a small but ardent following. For loyal fans of the show, Leto will always be indelibly linked to Catalano.

After it ended, Leto began focusing on film roles, earning praise for his portrayal of Olympic hopeful Steve Prefontaine, to whom he bore a striking resemblance, in the 1997 biopic “Prefontaine.” As would prove to be the case for a number of Leto’s most committed performances, the film did poorly at the box office.

Leto went further against his teen-dream image by playing a pretty boy who gets his face thrashed in David Fincher’s nihilistic psychodrama “Fight Club,” a junkie in Darren Aronofsky’s harrowing addiction tale “Requiem for a Dream” and a corn-rowed robber in Fincher’s home-invasion thriller “Panic Room.”

Six years before “Dallas Buyers Club,” Leto drastically changed his weight for another role, gaining 67 pounds to play John Lennon’s killer, Mark David Chapman, in “Chapter 27.” For his last film before “Dallas Buyers Club,” 2009’s “Mr. Nobody,” Leto once again altered his appearance, this time donning layers of old-man makeup to play a 118-year-old with a mind-bending past.

Both films flopped, and for the last several years, Leto has largely abstained from acting, instead focusing on his platinum-selling, arena-touring rock band, 30 Seconds to Mars.

On the New Orleans set of “Dallas Buyers” in December

2012, Leto told the Los Angeles Times why he put his music career on hold, saying he responded to the script’s story and humor and that “AIDS doesn’t get the attention I think it should.” It wasn’t, however, part of a larger choice to return to acting.

“I didn’t think I’d make a movie this year,” he said, then quickly added, “I didn’t think I’d be gone that long either. But five years goes by quickly.”

Leto was sitting with a reporter in his trailer, just a few hours after he had wrapped the shoot. Layers of makeup were slathered on his face, and it took two artists more than an hour to scrub, scrape and peel them off. At various intervals, Leto raised a long orange fingernail to signal a point, as he compared his on-stage persona as 30 Seconds’ frontman to his on-set incarnations such as Rayon and Chapman.

A few hours before, as Rayon, Leto had been dancing around during one of the movie’s gay-club scenes, singing a cappella to keep time for the extras and tottering over to his co-star Matthew McConaughey with what might be described as a tragic ebullience.

“It’s so strange,” Leto said, “to now be talking in my regular voice.”

Over the course of the shoot, he wore heels even in his trailer and almost never dropped his voice below Rayon’s high register. But he said that, far from an effect, these decisions were motivated by convenience as much as Method acting.

“The distance is so vast between who I am and who this is that if I had to start again every day, I’d end up with everything between, I don’t know, Tootsie and Priscilla Queen of the Desert.” He paused. “And that’s been done.”

By SOLVEJ SCHOU
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—Actors Jon Voight, Martin Landau and George Chakiris all have one shiny, golden thing in common.

They’re all former Oscar winners, and they all attended the annual Night of 100 Stars Oscar viewing party Sunday at the Beverly Hills Hotel, watching on enormous screens as younger talents such as best actor winner Matthew McConaughey and best supporting actor Jared Leto lived out emotional moments reminiscent of their own wins.

Voight, who snagged a best actor Oscar trophy back in 1978 for his heartbreaking, dramatic role as a paralyzed Vietnam War veteran in “Coming Home,” was especially moved by “Dallas Buyers Club” duo McConaughey and Leto. The 75-year-old actor intently and quietly watched McConaughey on-screen as he delivered his energetic acceptance speech mentioning God, family, his future self and making a sly reference to his breakout role in 1993’s “Dazed and Confused.”

“Matthew has a wonderful, explosive way about him. He’s passionate, and he goes for it. He doesn’t edit. It makes his work very pure and beautiful too. I admired his speech,” Voight said afterward. “Matthew mentioned God, which is a no-no at the Oscars, but he did it with great dignity. Jared is a likeminded soul, for me. He’s a great actor. I’m so glad he won. I’m impressed

Former winners reflect at Oscar party

with these guys. God bless them. This is a wonderful evening because of it.”

Celebrating Hollywood’s big night made Voight reflect back to his own win in 1978. Back then his idol Laurence Olivier was also nominated alongside him for the best actor Oscar, for “The Boys From Brazil.” It was Olivier’s long-time influence, and a speech that same night for a lifetime achievement award, that moved Voight most.

A few days before the awards ceremony, Voight had sat on a plane two rows behind Olivier—frail and hardly able to move after multiple illnesses—and was too shy to go up to him, Voight said. Yet the night before the Oscars, Olivier somehow found his number and called Voight at his house. Voight was bowled over by the Shakespearean great.

“He was a true icon in the mythology of my life. He said, ‘Hello, Jon, this is Larry Olivier here. Oh dear boy, what a wonderful performance you gave,’ said Voight. “Then I go to the awards, and Cary Grant introduces him for his lifetime achievement, and Laurence Olivier walks out as if he was one of the great kings of

one of his performances, and proceeded to give an astounding, poetic speech. I wanted to stand up and tell everyone, ‘You’re watching something astounding!’ When I won, I got up and said something about Laurence Olivier to start it off.”

Lithe at age 81, Chakiris landed his own best supporting actor Oscar in 1961 playing the street gang member Bernardo in the hit musical film “West Side Story.”

Eating pomegranate and citrus salad at Sunday’s Beverly Hills viewing party, he reminisced just after watching Lupita Nyong’o shed tears when she won a best supporting actress trophy for her role as a brutally victimized slave in “12 Years A Slave.”

“I think it’s the same for everybody. Everybody is astonished, and we don’t know quite what to say,” said Chakiris. “I felt the anticipation watching tonight. It’s wonderful to see the Academy honor these people, because they deserve the recognition.”

As for his own win more than a half century ago, he joyfully shared the reins of celebration that Oscar night with another “West Side Story” star, Rita Moreno, who won a best supporting actress trophy for her role as Bernardo’s

girlfriend Anita.

“We attended the ceremony together, and my category came up first. I was lucky. Then her category came up, and she was lucky,” he said. “We’re still great great friends today. The fact that we came together, we were both fortunate together, we spent the evening together. It was fantastic.”

There’s a striking similarity to McConaughey and Leto being both winners and friends at Sunday’s Academy Awards. Chakiris noted that working and winning together immediately creates, as with Moreno, a “special kind of bond.”

Landau, whose more than 50-year career included Oscar nominations in 1988 and 1989, and who won a best supporting actor Oscar in 1994 playing actor Bela Legosi in Tim Burton’s quirky “Ed Wood,” had a much more cynical take on the current crop of Oscar winners and nominees.

The white-haired 85-year-old actor, surrounded by friends and fans at his table, spoke softly but definitively.

“I’ve got a lot of friends who are nominated. The problem is—and I don’t like to mention names because they’re friends of mine—but a good actor, it’s how he hides his feelings, not how he shows his feelings, and very few actors do that,” said Landau. “When I’m watching the Oscars, I have a lot of mixed feelings. There should be people who are nominated that shouldn’t be nominated.”



Landau

Handler's Oscar tweets draw accusations of racism



In this May 2, 2013 file photo, Chelsea Handler arrives at "An Unforgettable Evening" benefiting EIF's Women's Cancer Research Fund at The Beverly Wilshire in Beverly Hills, Calif.

AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Comedian Chelsea Handler drew accusations of racism after she was invited to take over The Huffington Post's Twitter account during Sunday night's Oscars and repeatedly touted her upcoming book, "Uganda Be Kidding Me," whenever "12 Years A Slave" received an award.

In one, she tweeted, "Congratulations #12yearsaslave Go to Africa or buy #uganda-bekiddingme <http://amzn.to/1de1ka9> #ahead-ofthecurve #Oscars."

People responded via Twitter with words like "disgraceful," "offensive" and "racist."

Huffington Post senior executive director Perri Dorset said the site was upfront about the Twitter feed takeover and has invited celebrities to do so in the past, adding, "the views are theirs not ours."

Handler also took a swipe at Kenyan supporting actress winner Lupita Nyong'o, tweeting, "#AngelinaJolie just filed adoption papers #lupitanyongo #Oscars -@chelseahandler."

Handler's publicist did not return messages seeking comment.

Girl who loves troubled boy can't save him all by herself

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My 13-year-old daughter, "Lizzie," continues to talk to a 14-year-old boy who is very controlling and abusive to her. I made her stop talking to him, took away her cellphone privileges, and tried to show her how wrong he was for her and that she was going to wind up very hurt.

After recently giving her the cellphone back, I learned last night that Lizzie has been talking to him and lying to me about it. He sent her a text that if she didn't answer his call within seven minutes, he was either going to shoot himself or cut himself. He included a picture of his arm with a knife held against it. She thinks that her compliance is all that's standing in the way of this boy killing himself.

I'm scared for her safety, but she won't listen to me because she "loves" him. When I called the boy's mother about it, she became defensive and accused me of implying she was a bad mother. Please tell me how to handle this.

WORRIED MOM IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR WORRIED MOM: It's time to have a nonconfrontational conversation with your daughter about the dynamics of emotional blackmail, because that's exactly what she's experiencing. Your daughter needs to realize that the boy appears to have serious emotional problems and as much as she may love him, she's not equipped to help him or to prevent him from hurting himself if he really wants to.

As long as Lizzie sees herself as a hero who is saving his life by sacrificing hers, he won't get the help he needs. So if she REALLY cares about him—and I have no doubt she does—she will end the relationship because it isn't a healthy one for either of them.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: A friend of mine, "Cameron," has a problem. It's his second year in college and he's still a virgin. He gave his heart to a girl in the past, and it left him bitter, emotionally unavailable and, unfortunately, unlaidd. He is outspoken, but deep down he lacks confidence.

How can my friends and I help him, and how can he help himself?

HIS BFF IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR BFF: You are well-meaning, but the person asking this question should be your friend Cameron. While the fact that he may be "unlaid" and "unavailable" bothers you and your friends, it's possible that it doesn't bother HIM.

If and when Cameron does tell you he is troubled by it, advise him to visit the student health center and discuss it with a counselor because there may be complicated reasons for it. He doesn't need help losing his virginity. But he may need help addressing his trust issues or he may always remain emotionally unavailable.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: How do you feel about young adults using the F-word in public? My sweetie, a mom of two, insists the word is becoming accepted. I am of the "old school," and I maintain that the word is tasteless and shouldn't be used in public. What do you think?

KEEPING IT CLEAN IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR KEEPING IT CLEAN: I think that, regardless of age, the F-word should not be used in public—and if it's used in private, it should be reserved only for "special occasions."

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Post-Oscar sales jump for '12 Years a Slave' book

NEW YORK (AP)—"12 Years a Slave" is getting a post-Oscar bump—for the book it was based on. The 19th-century memoir by ex-slave Solomon Northup jumped from No. 326 on Amazon.com before Sunday night's Academy Awards ceremony to No. 19 on Monday afternoon. The film was directed by Steve McQueen and stars Chiwetel Ejiofor. It was among last year's most highly praised releases and won the Oscar for best picture. It was the first film directed by a black person to win for best picture. The book and the movie tell of how the free-born black Northup was kidnapped and forced into slavery. Thanks to the movie's success, interest in the book has been revived and public high schools are starting to add it to course lists.

Jay Z's Roc Nation to manage Kanye West

NEW YORK (AP)—His throne continues to build: Jay Z's Roc Nation will now manage Kanye West. The management company and West's label announced Monday that Roc Nation will work alongside West's production house, DONDA, on managing the Grammy-winning superstar's music endeavors. Izvor Zivkovic will continue to manage West as well. Roc Nation manages Rihanna, Shakira, Timbaland and other acts. West burst on the music scene as a producer on Jay Z's albums, and the two eventually collaborated on various songs and albums. West officially launched DONDA in 2011, and it is named after his late mother, Donda West. The rapper has used the company to design the technology for his latest tours and to produce the "Cruel Summer" short film.

Oscars draw 43 million viewers

NEW YORK (AP)—An estimated 43 million people watched the Academy Awards, the most-watched audience for the show in a decade and most popular entertainment event on television since the "Friends" finale in 2004. The Nielsen company said Monday that Oscar viewership was up for the third straight year and is considered yet another example of how social media is helping to drive up the ratings for big television events. The Oscars last year were seen by 40.4 million people. Ellen DeGeneres was host of the Academy Awards for a second time, replacing the edgy Seth MacFarlane, who had the job last year. The Oscars, which aired Sunday, are usually the second most-watched television program of the year in the United States, after the Super Bowl.

'Made in Dagenham' musical coming to London stage

LONDON (AP)—The story of a band of female workers who fight the powers at their Ford factory is heading to London's stage. Producers said Monday that "Quantum of Solace" actress Gemma Arterton will play the lead role in "Made in Dagenham," a musical based on the 2010 film of the same name. The musical is written by Richard Bean—the playwright behind trans-Atlantic hit "One Man, Two Guvnors"—with music by David Arnold (who has composed for Bond films and "Sherlock") and lyrics by Richard Thomas ("Jerry Springer: The Opera.") Arterton said she looked forward to telling the story with "wit, warmth and, of course, a lot of singing and dancing." Directed by Rupert Goold, the show opens at London's Adelphi Theatre on Nov. 5.

Toronto mayor's appears on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live'

TORONTO (AP)—Embattled Toronto Mayor Rob Ford is laughing off Jimmy Kimmel's suggestion that he get help for his drinking.

Ford appeared Monday on the "Jimmy Kimmel Live" late night TV talk show in Los Angeles. Kimmel told Ford that if he's an alcoholic, and drinking enough that he would try crack cocaine in his 40s, "and you don't remember it, maybe that's something that you might want to think about, like talking to somebody."

Ford shot back his head and laughed before saying he "wasn't elected to be perfect."

Ford last year made international headlines when he

acknowledged having smoked crack while in a drunken stupor. He continues to draw attention

for his erratic behavior, but has resisted pressure to step down and is seeking re-election.



AP

In this Sunday, March 2, 2014 photo released by ABC shows Rob Ford on the 9th annual "Jimmy Kimmel Live: After the Oscars" Special on the ABC, broadcast from Disney's El Capitan Theater located on Hollywood Boulevard, in Los Angeles.

'Blackfish' director denies SeaWorld's allegations

ORLANDO, Florida (AP)—The director of a documentary that explored a killer whale's involvement in the death of a SeaWorld trainer says a Labor Department investigator who probed the incident didn't provide filmmakers with any confidential documents.

In a statement to The Associated Press, "Blackfish" director Gabriela Cowperthwaite says that Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigator Lara Padgett wasn't part of its pro-

duction and that she, "along with her OSHA colleagues, declined repeated requests to participate in Blackfish."

Cowperthwaite says she's "looking forward to a day when SeaWorld honestly and transparently addresses animal welfare and trainer safety."

SeaWorld filed a complaint last week alleging Padgett engaged in unethical conduct by providing filmmakers with government documents. The allegations were turned over to Office of the Inspector General.

Pastimes

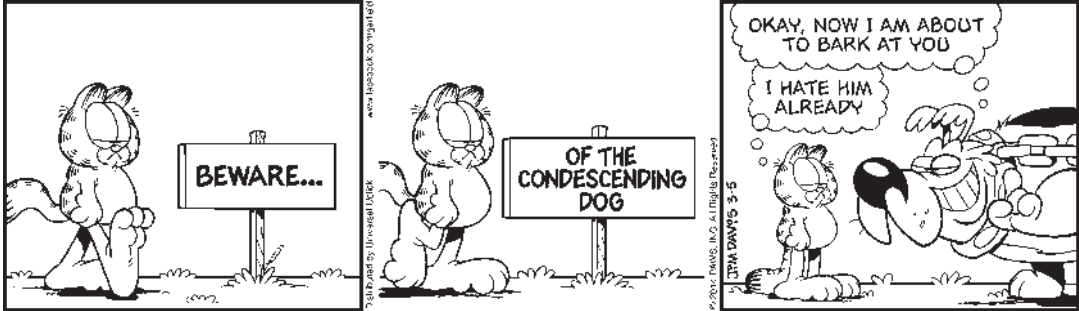
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



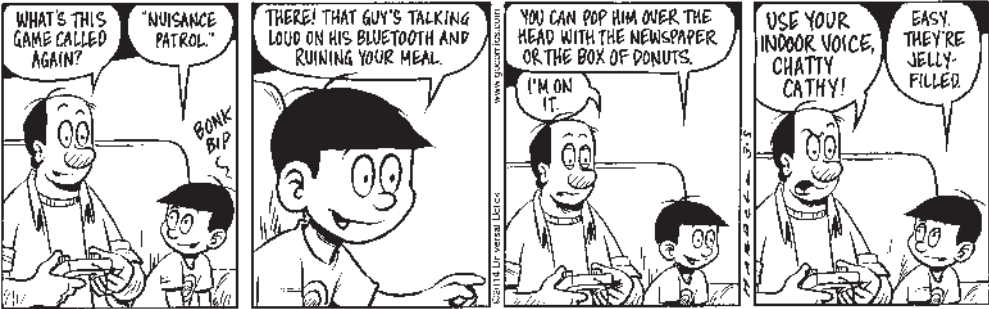
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



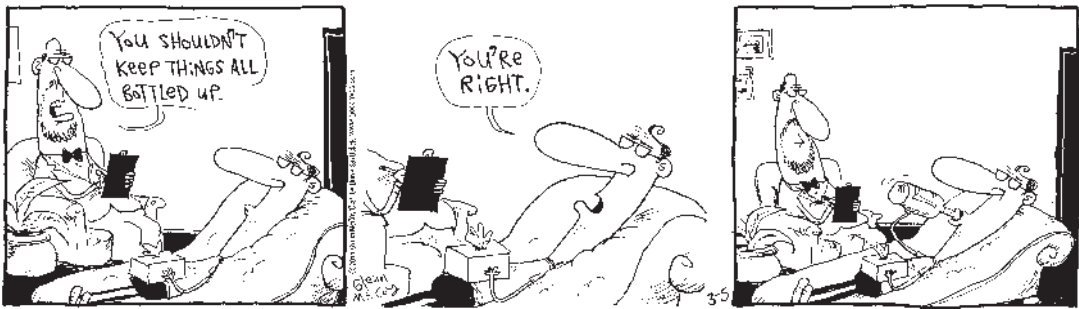
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Bear hair

4 Ashy

7 July 4, 1776, e.g.

8 Impel

10 Put in a carton

11 Tortoni ingredient

13 "Old Folks at Home" penner

16 DDE opponent

17 Rags-to-riches writer

18 — Tin

19 Edges

20 Second letter

21 Fairy tale family

23 Des-chanel of "New Girl"

25 Chester — Arthur

26 Clinton Cabinet member

27 Decay

28 Michel-angelo master-piece

30 Donkey

33 Guardians of a sort

36 "Castle" concern

37 One type of key-board ...

38 ... and another

39 Easter emblem

40 Flamenco cheer

41 CSA VIP

2 Miners' sch.

3 Lucille Ball trade-mark

4 "The Bonfire of the Vanities" writer

5 Knight-clothes?

6 Sgt. and Cpl.

7 Be too fond

8 Vampire's features

9 Main course

10 Merit badge org.

12 God

14 Shade providers

15 Genetic matter

19 Skedad-dled

20 Greet the villain

21 Actor

22 Really, really likes

23 Catherine —

24 Continually winning

25 "Bow-wow"

26 Copy, for short

28 Go by bike

29 "Good-night" girl

30 View-point

31 Remain

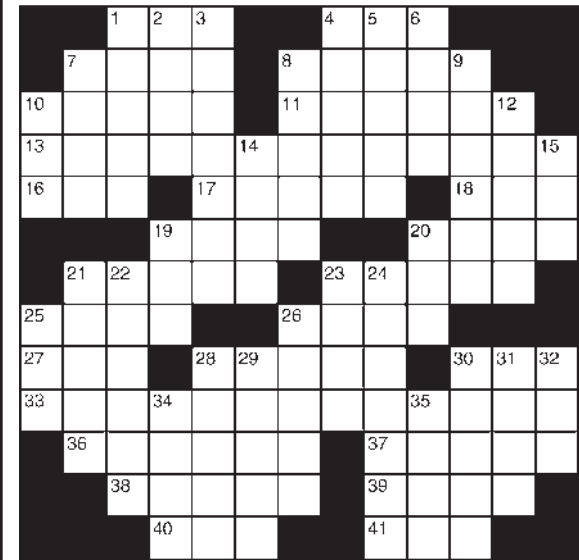
32 IRS ID

34 21-Across, e.g.

35 Great Lake

Solution time: 21 mins.

Yesterday's answer 3-5



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kevin Connolly, 40; Matt Lucas, 40; Eva Mendes, 40; Dean Stockwell, 78.

Happy Birthday: Take a bold approach, and you will make a difference this year to your own life, as well as to those you deal with regularly. Diversity will enable you to meet any demands you face. Show your intent, tolerance and ability to adapt to the changing world around you. Doors will open as you go, leading to unexpected gains. Your numbers are 3, 14, 22, 25, 31, 46

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Implement a couple of changes to your appearance or mannerisms to stay comfortably within the boundaries set by those you must deal with regularly. The effort you make will show your interest in being a team player. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Take pride in what you do and continue to make plans for the future. Refrain from discussing your ideas openly and don't feel the need to make alterations based on what others do. Stick to your strategy and keep moving forward. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't share too much information with those looking for help or a handout. You are best to wait and watch to see what's really needed and what isn't. Make sure that motives are in the right place before you make a commitment. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Take the road less traveled. You'll attract attention if you take a unique approach to whatever you do. Use your imagination and you'll come up with something innovative that will help others.

ers. Respect must be gained, not bought. ****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You are overdue for a change. A chance to re-evaluate and make personal moves will help you stabilize your current situation. Don't allow an emotional incident to affect your professional choices or productivity. Be reserved in your dealings with others. **

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Look for things to do that inspire you mentally, physically and emotionally. Getting together with friends, focusing on family or even taking care of personal needs will give you the boost you need to broaden your perspective and expand your pursuits. ****

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You can spread yourself a little thin and get things accomplished that will make onlookers jealous of your success. Romance is in the stars and will make your personal life that much more fulfilling and exciting. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't let emotional conversations stifle what you can do. Your focus should be on creativity and making your home a place of comfort and entertainment. Use your imagination and expand in areas that interest you. Explore new possibilities. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't be fooled by what others say or do. Look at what you can do to improve your personal life and your surroundings. Protect your physical and emotional wellness by taking precautions not to make the same mistakes you have in the past. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Put your ideas to the test. Flush out any problems and follow through until you reach the desired results before you present what you have to offer to others. Put time aside for love and romance. ****

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Plunge into what you want to accomplish. Don't waste time explaining what you are doing. Someone is likely to try to lead you astray or use your hard work to get ahead. Do things for yourself, not for others. **

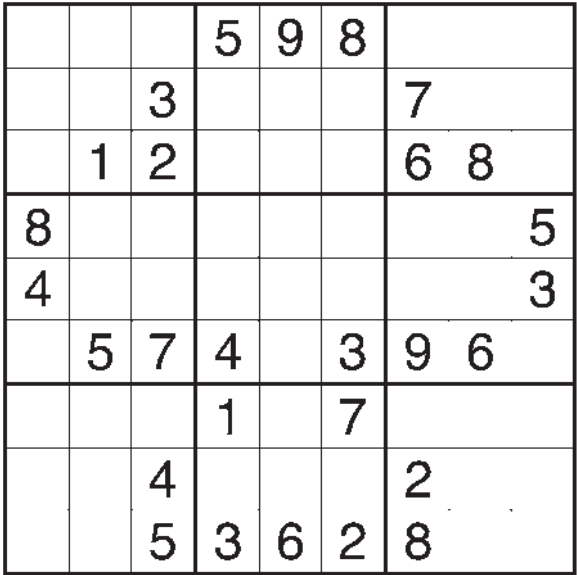
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You can make a difference and a good impression if you help others. The rewards will be greater than anticipated. Getting together with someone from your past will spark an idea you'll want to pursue. Love is on the rise. ****

Birthday Baby: You are a proactive, outgoing dreamer with a plan to succeed.

Eugenia's website—eugenialast.com, Eugenia's android app @ <http://bit.ly/exhoro> and join Eugenia on twitter/facebook/linkedin.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

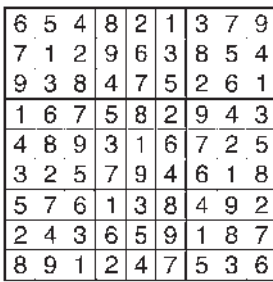


Difficulty Level ★★★

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer



Difficulty Level **

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

BLACKBEARD THE PIRATE

Solution: 10 letters



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Beard, Boots, Cargo, Cocoa, Eden, Edward, Fleet, Fuses, Gold, Intimidate, Jane, Leader, Legend, Long, Loot, Maynard, Merchant, Movies, Myth, Navy Sailors, North Carolina, Ocracoke, Piracy, Pirate, Plunder, Ports, Ranger, Sailing, Sandbar, Sea Robber, Ships, Shipwreck, Silver, Skeleton, Smoky, Spear, Spoils, Spotswood, Sugar, Tobacco
Yesterday's Answer: Website
Treasury 12, 13, 14 or 15 can be purchased online at wonderword.universalclick.com. (Contain 130 puzzles.)

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LeBron nets 61, Heat top Bobcats, 124-107



MIAMI (AP)—Best player. Best game of his career.

LeBron James clearly isn't ready to concede his MVP award to anyone yet.

Dazzling from inside and out, James put on the best scoring show of his NBA life Monday night, pouring in 61 points—a career high and franchise record—as the Miami Heat beat the Charlotte Bobcats 124-107. It was the eighth straight win for the two-time defending champions, who are starting to roll as the playoffs get near.

James made 22 of 33 shots from the field, including his first eight 3-point attempts.

“The man above has given me some unbelievable abilities to play the game of basketball,” James said. “I just try to take advantage of it every night. I got the trust of my teammates and my coaching staff to go in there and let it go.”

His career best had been 56 points, on March 20, 2005, for Cleveland against Toronto. Glen Rice scored 56 to set the Heat record on April 15, 1995, against Orlando.

James had 24 points at half-time, then added 25 in the third quarter. The record-breaker came with 5:46 left, when James spun through three defenders for a layup that fell as he tumbled to the court.

“There was an efficiency to what he was doing,” Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. “The rim looked like an ocean for him.”

Spoelstra walked into his postgame news conference with a confession: He nearly took James out after the third quarter.

Good thing he thought better of that plan.

“He was in a great groove, obviously,” Spoelstra said.

Al Jefferson had 38 points and 19 rebounds for the Bobcats, his huge night merely an afterthought.

This was all about LeBron.

“You take away his 61 points,” Jefferson said, “and we still had a fighting chance there at the end.”

Yes, even the Bobcats were marveling at James. He was hitting from everywhere, even a pull-up 3-pointer from about 30 feet - Spoelstra joked it was from 40 - late in the third quarter, as the crowd roared and the Heat bench jumped with joy.

“Yeah, that was a designed play,” Spoelstra deadpanned. “We’ve been working on that one for a while.”

That was the moment, James said, when he knew he was in the midst of a special night.

“I felt pretty good in the first half but halftime can always kind of derail things and slow things up,” James said. “But I was able to get things going once again in the third quarter and I knew it could be one of those nights.”

Not “one of those nights.”

Even for James, this was like no other.

Most points in a game. Most field goals in a game. Most points in any quarter in Heat history, with the 25 in the third. Most points in the second half, 37, by any Heat player ever.

“Once he sniffed 60, we knew he was going for it,” Heat forward Shane Battier said. “And the amazing part is the efficiency. Good Lord. Sixty-one on 33 shots, that’s Wilt Chamberlainesque. That’s pretty amazing. Incredible performance.”

When James checked out with 1:24 left, the entire Heat roster met him near midcourt for high-fives and hugs, and the sellout crowd gave him a standing ovation. A second huge roar followed when he waved to the crowd, as “M-V-P” chants rained down.

Charlotte has allowed the two biggest single-game scoring totals in the NBA this season. Carmelo Anthony had 62 points for the New York Knicks against the Bobcats on Jan. 24.

Chris Bosh scored 15 for the Heat, and Toney Douglas added 10.

Chris Douglas-Roberts and Anthony Tolliver each scored 12 for Charlotte.

“If he’s going to shoot the ball like that from that range, there’s nobody that’s going to beat them,” Bobcats coach Steve Clifford said.

Miami was without guard Dwyane Wade, who got a night off to rest. Spoelstra stressed there’s been no setback for Wade, who has been on a knee-maintenance program throughout this season and is averaging 23.5 points on 62 percent shooting since the All-Star break.

Wade probably didn’t mind sitting for this one. It gave him a courtside seat for the show.

James scored 11 in the first quarter, after which Miami led by three, and added 13 more in the second. His 24-point first half was the highest-scoring opening 24 minutes for the four-time MVP in nearly a year, helping stake the Heat to a 60-54 lead at the break.

Jefferson was up to 26 at that point. He didn’t cool off much after halftime, either.

It just didn’t matter.

James, said Clifford, “was phenomenal.”

There was no way Jefferson or anyone else was keeping up with James, who had to listen to critics in recent weeks say that Kevin Durant’s scoring for Oklahoma City this season shifted the balance of MVP power.

Not so fast.

“Every night I go on the floor I want to be the MVP, of this league, MVP of this team, MVP for me, myself and my family,” James said. “I’ve set a high standard and I have to live by that.”

James made three 3-pointers in the first 7 minutes of the quarter—he was 6 for 6 from beyond the arc at that point—and when



AP

Miami Heat's LeBron James reacts to the crowd after setting a team record during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Miami, Monday, March 3, 2014, against the Charlotte Bobcats.

Charlotte bit on his head fake from the top of the key, James coolly found Douglas to set up another 3. A tip-in by James followed not long afterward and just like that, the lead was up to 83-63.

Charlotte scored the next six points, but any notion that the game was slipping from Miami’s control was quickly extinguished.

James scored the next six himself, a pair of three-point plays to restore the 20-point edge and give him 43 points, already a season high.

All that was left to see was what he’d finish with.

The answer was history.

“I was happy I was able to make a few plays to help us win,” James said.

Nets 96, Bulls 80

In New York, Jason Collins played the final minutes of a winning home debut with the Brooklyn Nets, who cooled off Chicago.

Finally playing at home more than a week after returning to the NBA as the league’s first openly gay player, Collins checked in with 2:41 remaining to a standing ovation from a sellout crowd of 17,732 that included former NBA Commissioner David Stern. Collins committed a foul just 5 seconds later and missed his only shot as the Nets won their third straight.

Collins’ original 10-day contract will expire Tuesday and the Nets plan to sign him to a second deal on Wednesday. He has appeared in all five games since he signed on Feb. 23.

Deron Williams scored 20 points and Joe Johnson had 19 for the Nets (29-29), who got back to .500 for the first time since they were 2-2 on Nov. 5.

The sloppy Bulls turned it over 28 times, leading to 30 Brooklyn points, and had their four-game winning streak snapped. They had a franchise-low three turnovers in their 109-90 victory over the

Knicks on Sunday and had won nine of 10.

Grizzlies 110, Wizards 104

In Washington, Tayshaun Prince scored a season-high 21 points and Memphis withstood a late rally to snap Washington’s winning streak at six.

Zach Randolph added 16 points and 10 rebounds for the Grizzlies, who improved to a season-high nine games above .500 and pulled within one game of the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference. Memphis shot 60 percent after the first quarter and outscored Washington 62-34 in the paint for the game.

John Wall scored 23 points and Bradley Beal had 21 for the Wizards. Washington had answered a challenge by winning its first three games after losing starting forward Nene to a knee injury, but this time the rotation was also missing forwards Kevin Seraphin (sore right knee) and Martell Webster (sore back).

Timberwolves 132, Nuggets 128

In Denver, Kevin Love scored 33 points and tied a season high with 19 rebounds for his NBA-best 50th double-double this season, and Minnesota beat skidding Denver for its third win in a row.

Love topped 30 points for the 11th time in his last 14 starts, helping the Timberwolves wrap up a 4-1 trip out west.

The Nuggets got a boost from the return of Ty Lawson, who scored a season-high 31 points with 11 assists in his first game since breaking his left rib Feb. 8 at Detroit. But it wasn’t enough to reverse their sagging fortunes. Denver lost its sixth straight and has dropped 11 of 12 overall.

Kevin Martin added 22 points for the Timberwolves, including four clutch free throws in the final 11.7 seconds. Minnesota finished with a huge advantage at the foul line, making 52 of 64 (81.3 percent) to Denver’s 16 of 25 (64 percent).

Lakers 107, Trail Blazers 106

In Portland, Ore., Kent Bazemore threw an alley-oop to Wesley Johnson for the go-ahead dunk with 6.9 seconds left to lift Los Angeles over Portland.

Pau Gasol scored 22 points and the Lakers won their second straight, snapping the Trail Blazers’ five-game winning streak. Jodie Meeks added 21 points.

The Lakers led by 15 in the first quarter and pushed the lead to 97-86 in the fourth, but Wesley Matthews’ fadeaway jumper tied it at 105 with 1:10 left.

Damian Lillard hit one of two free throws to give Portland its first lead since the first quarter. But the officials reversed a pos-

session call with 7.1 seconds left, giving the ball to the Lakers. Bazemore lobbed to Johnson for the dunk and Lillard missed a 3-pointer as time ran out.

Robin Lopez had 19 points and 16 rebounds for the Blazers.

Bucks 114, Jazz 88

In Milwaukee, Ersan Ilyasova scored a season-high 31 points on 13-of-14 shooting, and Milwaukee hit a blistering 57 percent from the field to beat Utah.

Zaza Pachulia added 14 points, six rebounds and five assists, and five Bucks scored in double digits. The NBA’s worst team improved to 12-47 and enjoyed a rare breather at home.

Enes Kanter had 27 points to lead Utah, mired by a mistake-prone third quarter in which the Bucks regularly led by at least 20.

NBA Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar took in some of the action. Drafted No. 1 overall by the Bucks in 1969, Abdul-Jabbar was in town to promote a tourism ad for the state of Wisconsin that played off his acting role in the movie “Airplane.”

Pistons 96, Knicks 85

In Auburn Hills, Mich., Andre Drummond had 17 points and a career-high 26 rebounds as Detroit surged past New York in a matchup of slumping teams.

The Pistons had lost four straight and seven of eight. New York has dropped seven straight and 13 of 15.

Carmelo Anthony scored 10 of his 28 points in a first quarter in which the Knicks led by as much as 14.

Detroit reserves Rodney Stuckey and Will Bynum each scored 16 points, helping their team’s bench outscore New York’s 36-7. The Pistons started the fourth quarter with eight unanswered points.

Amare Stoudemire had 22 points for the Knicks despite playing sparingly in the fourth quarter.

Kings 96, Pelicans 89

In Sacramento, Calif., DeMarcus Cousins had 23 points and 12 rebounds, Isaiah Thomas scored 22 and Sacramento beat slumping New Orleans.

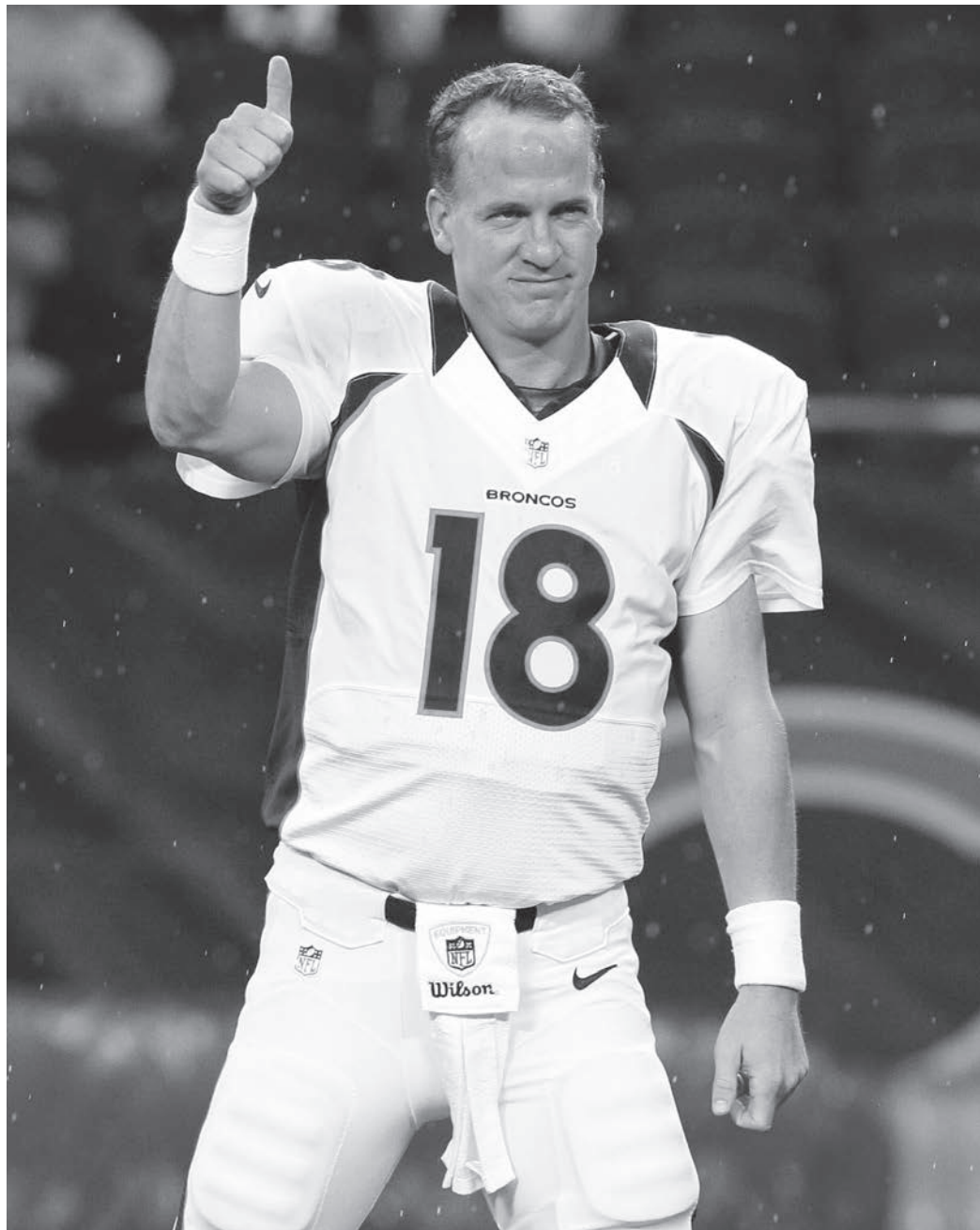
Behind the scoring of Thomas, the Kings took the lead late in the third quarter and never trailed in the fourth while snapping a three-game losing streak.

Rudy Gay added 14 points and Reggie Evans had 10 points and 13 rebounds for Sacramento, which outrebounded the Pelicans 47-30.

Tyreke Evans scored 14 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter and added 10 rebounds and eight assists for the Pelicans, who have dropped eight straight and 10 of 11.

New Orleans All-Star forward Anthony Davis shot 4 of 14 and had 13 points. He missed his first 10 shots.

Source: Peyton Manning passes physical



In this Aug. 9, 2012 file photo, Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning gestures before an NFL pre-season football game against the Chicago Bears, in Chicago. AP



ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP)—Sixty touchdown passes. Fifteen wins. A fifth MVP trophy.

Peyton Manning is more productive than he's ever been, and whether he's deciphering defenses at the line of scrimmage on game day or on his iPad during the week, his love for the game hasn't waned.

The final piece of evidence that Manning is as good as ever came Monday.

As expected, Manning passed the exam on his surgically repaired neck that was required by his contract with the Broncos that will pay him \$20 million next season, according to a person with knowledge of the results. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Monday because results of medical checkups typically aren't announced.

Manning has said that if doctors tell him he's at risk physically, he'd have no problem calling it a career.

After his four neck procedures, including a spinal fusion that sidelined him for all of 2011 and eventually led to his release from Indianapolis, Manning has said he has steered himself for that possibility.

At the Super Bowl last month, he talked about how his older

brother, Cooper, had to give up football after neck surgeries in high school and college, and how that had a big impact on his life.

"I remember at the time, when Cooper got injured, they did a test on me and Eli. I would have been a junior in high school and Eli would have been a sixth-grader, or something. They said our necks weren't picture perfect and didn't look ideal, but they're stable enough to keep playing football. Cooper had to give up playing football. In some ways, when I had my neck problems, I thought maybe I had been on borrowed time this entire time," Manning said. "I was fortunate to have 20 years of health to play football. If that was going to be the end of it because of a neck injury, I really, believe it or not, had a peace about it."

Once doctors told him his neck was secure, however, Manning said he quickly shifted his focus to seeing if he could strengthen his weakened throwing arm to the point where he could be productive again.

After the Colts released him, Manning signed a five-year, \$96 million deal in Denver, where he's thrown for 100 TDs, including the playoffs, while going 28-7 with two AFC titles.

Manning won his fifth MVP award in 2013, when he set single-season records by pass-

ing for 5,547 yards and 55 TDs while guiding the Broncos, the highest-scoring team in NFL history, to their first Super Bowl in 15 seasons.

Manning, who will be 38 next season, said during Super Bowl week that he had no intention of retiring after the Super Bowl.

Although Manning's plans for 2014 became a big story line in the playoffs, the Broncos front office had proceeded as though their quarterback would be returning for another run at a title. Although his deal with Denver requires him to pass a physical every spring to make sure his neck is OK, if there were any concerns about his neck, he wouldn't have started all 16 games, plus three more in the playoffs.

Not only is Manning still performing at his peak level, he said he still enjoys everything that goes into getting ready to play on game days and "when you still enjoy the preparation, I think you probably still ought to be doing that," he said at the Super Bowl.

He passed his required exit physical that all players take in the days following the Broncos' Super Bowl loss to Seattle. He then played in the Pebble Beach Pro-Am golf tournament just days later, another indication that his neck is fine.

49ers, Anquan Boldin agree to 2-year deal

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—While chatter has swirled about Jim Harbaugh's future with the 49ers in recent weeks, wide receiver Anquan Boldin has secured his status in San Francisco—and even credited the coach for his decision to come back.

The franchise gave him a few million other reasons, too.

The 49ers signed Boldin to a two-year, \$12 million contract with \$9 million guaranteed Monday, keeping quarterback Colin Kaepernick's top option from last season and one of Harbaugh's favorites from hitting free agency.

"He's a guy I had a real good relationship with," Boldin said about Harbaugh on a conference call with reporters. "Me and him were able to talk about anything. And I just like his demeanor, the way he approaches the game. He's a guy that wants to win. I'm the exact same way. So I think we mesh pretty good."

Boldin, who was set to become a free agent next week, led San Francisco with 85 catches for 1,179 yards to go with seven touchdowns last season. He was traded from John Harbaugh's Ravens to the 49ers in the offseason for a sixth-round pick after helping Baltimore win the Super Bowl.

While the salary cap strapped Ravens failed to make the playoffs, the 49ers finished 12-4 during the regular season - in part because Boldin filled the void created by an offseason torn right Achilles tendon that sidelined Michael Crabtree for the first 11 games. Boldin's

performances earned him the Bill Walsh Award, given to the team MVP by the coaches.

Boldin's deal locked up one of San Francisco's top offseason priorities and briefly quieted the questions about Harbaugh's future with the 49ers after reports surfaced in recent weeks about the team fielding trade offers for the coach from the Cleveland Browns, a possible rift with general manager Trent Baalke and even problems with players.

Boldin said he doesn't pay much attention to NFL news in the offseason because he's focused on his family and charitable foundation and "at this time of year, people grab at whatever." But he admitted he'd been following the Harbaugh saga.

"When I did hear about it, I kind of laughed," Boldin said. "I don't think anybody in our locker room has an issue with coach Harbaugh. The way our locker room is built, we have an open-door policy. If anybody has a concern or wants to voice their opinion, they're more than welcome to."

"There have been times when we have voiced our concerns as players, and coach Harbaugh has listened to us and taken into consideration how we felt as players. So I don't think there's any rift between players and coaches, particularly coach Harbaugh."

Boldin's return to San Francisco was not all that surprising.

Harbaugh said at last week's NFL Scouting Combine that the franchise was determined to re-sign the wide receiver, and Boldin had repeatedly said he wanted to come back. The sides hashed out the deal before Boldin could become a free agent for the first time in

his 11-year career.

"We are pleased that Anquan has chosen to continue his career as a 49er," Baalke said in a statement. "He is a consummate professional whose love and respect for the game provide a tremendous example for all players. Anquan has been a very productive player throughout his career and we look forward to his future contributions to our team and community."

Boldin's transition to the 49ers seemed seamless.

Boldin, now 33 years old, was at his best in his debut for San Francisco when he caught 13 passes for 208 yards and a touchdown in a 34-28 win over Green Bay.

He then capped his season with his second-best game with nine catches for 149 yards and a score in a Week 17 win over Arizona that clinched the fifth seed for San Francisco.

In three playoff games, Boldin had 16 catches for 227 yards and a touchdown. The 49ers lost in the NFC title game to the eventual Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks.

Boldin, drafted by Arizona in the second round out of Florida State in 2003, played seven seasons for the Cardinals and three for the Ravens. The three-time Pro Bowler has 857 receptions for 11,344 yards and 65 touchdowns in his career, which he believes is far from finished.

"Physically, I feel fine," he said. "I feel as if I can play five more years. So that's not a problem for me. I feel great. But we'll see how it goes."



In this Jan. 19, 2014 file photo, San Francisco 49ers' Anquan Boldin celebrates his touchdown catch during the second half of the NFL football NFC Championship game against the Seattle Seahawks, in Seattle. AP

MLB’s expanded replay gets 1st test, calls upheld

SCOTT S-DALE, Ariz. (AP)—Challenged for the first time under Major League Baseball’s expanded replay system, umpires got it right.

The umps went 3 for 3 on Monday as MLB tried out the new format at three spring training games.

The first test came at 3:06 p.m. EST in Fort Myers, Fla., after first base umpire Fieldin Culbreth ruled Toronto shortstop Munenori Kawasaki’s throw pulled Jared Goedert off the bag in the sixth inning.

“I’m not too sure that you’re not right here,” Culbreth said. Blue Jays manager John Gibbons told him, “but since we haven’t done it before, let’s go take a look.”

Culbreth answered: “OK. That’s what it’s for.”

After 2 minutes, 34 seconds, replay umpire Brian O’Nora

relayed his call by headset, confirming that Minnesota batter Chris Rahl was safe. During the wait, Rahl said he realized he perhaps was part of history.

“It’s kind of funny. I was thinking, ‘Is this the first one?’” he said.

O’Nora made the final ruling from a satellite truck outside the stadium. During the regular season, umpires on the field will check with the replay booth in New York, where an MLB umpire will make the final call.

Later in the game, Culbreth rotated and took a turn in the truck, confirming another safe call at first base.

“I’m looking at this thing as, this is the future of the game. And I’m going to treat these games here the same way that I’m going to treat them during the regular season,” Culbreth said.

In the eighth inning, Doug Bernier of the Twins was called

safe on a close play at first. As Culbreth studied the replay, the ballpark sound system played a Rolling Stones song with the familiar lyric, “I can’t get no satisfaction.”

The call was confirmed, Bernier was safe.

Extra replay also was in place for two games in Arizona—the Los Angeles Angels vs. Arizona Diamondbacks in Scottsdale and the Chicago Cubs against Milwaukee in Phoenix.

Each team in the majors will have at least five exhibition games with the new system in place.

In January, owners approved the use of additional video replay to review most calls other than balls-and-strikes. Previously, umpires could only go to replay to review home runs and boundary calls.

Moments after the first replay call, Angels manager Mike Scioscia wasted little time in using

his challenge.

In the top of the second, Luis Jimenez of the Angels tried to steal second. Catcher Bobby Wilson’s throw was high but second base umpire Bill Miller ruled that Aaron Hill tagged the runner out.

Scioscia bounded out of the dugout and charged toward Miller to argue, just like managers always have done.

Instead, though, he chose to use his challenge. After two of the umpires made a quick visit to the Angels dugout to communicate with the replay umpire, the call was upheld.

“We weren’t trying to make a mockery out of it,” Scioscia said of using the challenge so soon. “We thought it was a pretty close play.”

There was only one angle available with the limited camera work of a spring training telecast.

“If we have 15 angles of that,” Scioscia said, “there’s a possibil-

ity it gets reversed.”

That review took 2:31.

Since he lost the challenge, Scioscia had no more.

“I don’t think it’s going to take much time in the logistics. That will smooth out,” he said. “As far as the strategy of it, that’s going to take a lot. It might be something you win, but you know you need that challenge to save the big play somewhere.”

Twins manager Ron Gardenhire and Arizona’s Kirk Gibson did not use their challenge. Neither did Cubs manager Rick Renteria nor the Brewers’ Ron Roenicke.

Gibson said he thought about contesting a close play when Paul Goldschmidt nearly beat out a grounder but said he decided it was 50-50 and not worth it.

“I think it’s going to be a lot more complicated than we thought,” Gibson said. “We had a lot of conversation during the game.”

For the Angels-Diamondbacks game, the replay trailer was set up in the parking lot behind center field. Teams are allowed to have a person to watch the game on television and advise the managers via phone whether it would be worth it for the call to be challenged.

The Angels communicated via walkie talkie Monday but there will be a dedicated phone line for each team in the major league parks.

Under the new rules, each manager has one challenge. If the first challenge is successful, the manager gets a second. From the seventh inning on, if the manager is out of challenges, the umpire can decide to have the play reviewed.

Some critics of expanded replay worried that challenges would delay the game too much. Culbreth said he didn’t think that would be a problem, and pointed at the benefits.

“It will work itself out. I think time really isn’t going to be an issue in the end,” he said. “And if it is, it’s about getting the play right in the end, anyhow.”

‘CRANK’

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opening round. The Japanese paid the price for his gamble, as Camacho shook him with a right cross. The Team Lloyd Irvin standout went for follow-up punches, hoping to punish Nakamura more, but the latter got out of trouble and started employing his trademark grappling and wrestling tactics on Camacho.

Camacho managed to stand up on each occasion that Nakamura pinned him down and worked on some kicks to his foe’s body. Camacho continued the standup fight in the closing seconds to win Round 1, but he was also on the receiving end of some blows, including a left straight that opened a bloody cut on his left eyebrow.

Gaining momentum from

his last-second hit on Camacho, Nakamura became more aggressive in the second round and this time stuck to his original game plan—bring the 155-lb bout to the ground. However, Camacho stayed strong on defense and almost always managed to get out of Nakamura’s hold.

“He took me down once and I worked my way back to my feet and later in the round as I was landing my heavy shots, uppercuts, hooks, jabs, and straights, he ended up taking me down again halfway and was working his signature rear naked choke. I defended properly and worked my way back up to my feet and tried to finish the round strong by kicking him to the body,” Camacho said.

Despite Camacho’s late charge, Nakamura managed to prevail in Round 2, so the two fighters went to the third round

even. The bout remained pretty close in the opening minute of the third and last round as Camacho connected on a few more punches, while Nakamura tried pinning him down anew. Then midway in the round, Camacho went all out, going for a string of strikes and egging Nakamura on to counter punch. Nakamura ended up backpedalling, trying to avoid Camacho’s flurry of punches in the closing seconds.

“In the third round it was clear I was trying to keep the fight on my feet and K-Taro trying to take the fight to the ground. I was landing my strikes as he was persistent trying to get the takedown. I defended every takedown with all my ability and tried to work the stand-up game. In the last 30 seconds, I kind of lost it and went into Crank mode. I don’t know what happened but I was in the zone

and wanted to finish the fight, so I just started yelling. It was a great fight,” Camacho said.

The tough win was a morale-boosting one for Camacho after he missed PXC 41 in the Philippines in November. He was supposed to challenge Seung Hwan “Macho” Bang for the PXC lightweight title belt, but pulled out from the bout the last minute because he got sick.

“Not being able to fight in the Philippines definitely motivated me. I had to pick my head back up and get back to working hard,” Camacho said.

The UFC 16 participant resumed training early this year and attended a fight camp at Alliance MMA in San Diego to prepare for PXC 42.

“Thanks to Isla Energy, Docomo Pacific, and Fokai Industries I was able to afford to go to San Diego to do a fight camp at Alliance MMA, with UFC

and both were unearned. Despite a lethargic offense, the Fielders stayed in the game, as they silenced the Jets in the next five innings with Donavin Ada pitching. Ada started out for the Fielders and pitched 6.3 innings, striking out nine.

With the Jets still on a drought after the top of the fifth, the Fielders stole the lead at the bottom off Jose Camacho’s stolen base and Greg Sablan’s run from a wild pitch. Juden Tenorio also scored off a wild pitch in the sixth inning,

while Chris Cepeda stole home to give the Fielders’ more cushion, 6-3.

The Jets tried to regain their bearings at the top of the last inning and got off to a good start with leadoff batter Andres Camacho reaching home off Napua Pua’s single with two outs. The Jets went on to have runners on second and first, but they were left stranded, as Fielders second baseman Markie Stevenson ended the game by catching a fly ball from Nathaniel Torres.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES				
NBA STANDINGS				
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	33	26	.559	—
Brooklyn	29	29	.500	3½
New York	21	40	.344	13
Boston	20	40	.333	13½
Philadelphia	15	45	.250	18½
Southeast Division				
Miami	43	14	.754	—
Washington	31	29	.517	13½
Charlotte	27	33	.450	17½
Atlanta	26	32	.448	17½
Orlando	19	43	.306	26½
Central Division				
Indiana	46	13	.780	—
Chicago	33	27	.550	13½
Detroit	24	36	.400	22½
Cleveland	24	37	.393	23
Milwaukee	12	47	.203	34
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Southwest Division				
San Antonio	43	16	.729	—
Houston	40	19	.678	3
Dallas	36	25	.590	8
Memphis	34	25	.576	9
New Orleans	23	37	.383	20½
Northwest Division				
Oklahoma City	45	15	.750	—
Portland	41	19	.683	4
Minnesota	30	29	.508	14½
Denver	25	34	.424	19½
Utah	21	39	.350	24
Pacific Division				
L.A. Clippers	41	20	.672	—
Golden State	36	24	.600	4½
Phoenix	35	24	.593	5
L.A. Lakers	21	39	.350	19½
Sacramento	21	39	.350	19½
BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS				

ENFORCERS

From Page 28

gassed out from the grueling game that started around 3pm.

The Comets managed to force the standoff despite going without a run in nine straight innings. Before the drought, the Comets scored five runs in the second inning behind the RBI single of Aurel Mendiola, RBI double from Vincent Kremius, and errors from the Enforcers.

The Enforcers, on the other

hand, had one unearned run in the first inning and got back into the game by notching two runs each in the fourth and fifth. Nogis hit a RBI single in the fourth, while Kier Agda nailed the other run off a Comets’ miscue and bagged an RBI single in the fifth. The other run in the fifth was courtesy off a Comets wild pitch.

The Comets lost the lead, as they struggled against Babauta and Agda for nine straight innings, as the two Enforcers pitchers combined for eight strikeouts and stranded nine runners.

Fielders 6, Jets 4

In the second Junior League pairing last Saturday, the Fielders (3-4) eked out a come-from-behind win over the Jets (3-5).

The Fielders drilled two runs apiece in the last two innings to bring down the Jets, who clung to a 3-2 lead after four complete innings. The Jets scored all their three runs in the first inning off an RBI single from Noel Cabrera, a fielder’s choice, and a Fielders’ booby.

The Fielders had one run each in the first two innings

wena Sison and Sally Hongsin Im, who was supposed to meet Havikka Farro and Mykki Caracut in the women’s doubles B tiff at 6am.

After forfeiting their first match, Farro and Caracut showed up in their second and last game for the day, but lost to Alma Ortega and Dianne Francisco. The two Saipan Badminton Club players eased past Farro and Caracut in the first game, 21-8, and also completed the sweep with a 21-16

victory in the second.

Three other women’s doubles matches were played last Friday with Marlou Malasarte and Marlene Pereja, Toshiko Obata and Windy Fernandez, and Gigi Zapanta and Lani Santos winning over separate foes. Malasarte and Peraja wee paired against Jen Savellano and Janelle Pangilinan and pulled off a 21-14, 9-21, 21-20 win in their women’s doubles A duel. In the women’s doubles B, Obata and Fernandez made

short work of Loyda Ito and Shirley Kim, 21-10, 21-11. Zapanta and Santos played in doubles C and rallied past Tina Lee and Hongsin Im, 19-21, 21-16, 21-13.

In the women’s singles division, Savellano topped Malasarte in Class A, 21-18, 21-18, while her doubles partner Pangilinan defeated Lanie Bartolome, 21-16, 21-13. In Class B matches, Obata dominated Marylyn Montano, 21-9, 21-15, while Francisco triumphed

over Lucelle Lampera, 21-16, 21-13. In the Class C tiff, Patricia Abantao first downed Zapanta, 21-8, 21-8, before bowing to Nicole Malasarte, 15-21, 10-21.

In the men’s singles, only two matches were set last Friday with Jexler Caranto prevailing in Class A and Pangilinan winning in Class B. Caranto swept Young Sang Yu, 21-16, 21-16, while Pangilinan outlasted Macario in three games, 18-21, 21-15, 21-16.

VETERAN

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13, 21-14.

In the men’s doubles C, Taga Badminton Club’s A.J. Ortega and partner and Han Cheol Yu and Jong Min Lee gained free victories after wining via defaults against the pairs of Panapa Peteru and Che and Jeremi Montenejo and John Cano, respectively. Also winning via walkover was the team of Ro-

Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival Clinic

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Participants pose with pro beach volleyball players at the conclusion of the Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival Clinic last month at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan sandcourts.



Jacklyne Jones shows participants where to hit the ball.



Female participants line up as a Japanese pro conducts a drill.



U.S. pro Jeff Carlucci lobs the ball to a participant.



Evan Silberstein stays near the net to set up participants for shots.



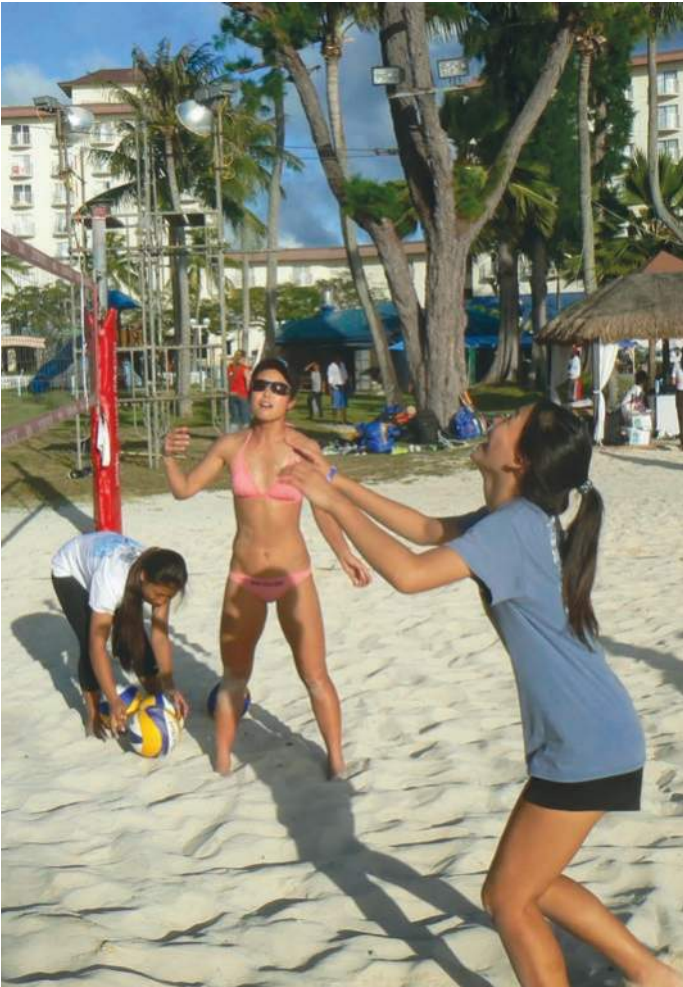
Japanese pro Yasuo Nakaya teaches a participant how to make a toss.



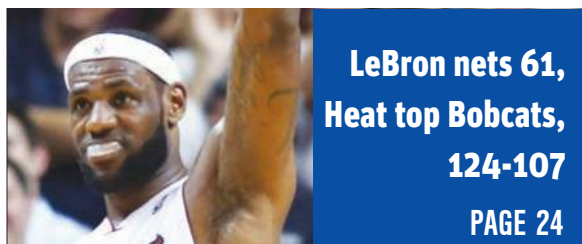
Kaui Salzman facilitates the serving drills.



Jacklyne Jones huddles with the participants before starting a friendly game.



A female Japanese pro watches a participant approaching the ball.



**LeBron nets 61,
Heat top Bobcats,
124-107
PAGE 24**

Saipan Tribune Sports

**Source: Peyton
Manning passes
physical
PAGE 25**



28 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2014

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

'Crank' survives Japanese foe



PXC PHOTO

Frank "The Crank" Camacho raises his arms after earning a win via split decision against Japan's Keita "K-Taro" Nakamura during the semi main event in PXC 42 last Friday at the University of Guam Fieldhouse.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Frank "The Crank" Camacho endured Japan's Keita "K-Taro" Nakamura, earning a win via split decision in the semi-main event in PXC 42 last Friday at the University of Guam Fieldhouse.

Camacho wisely went for a standup fight in the deciding third round and landed solid punches on Nakamura's body and face, convincing two of the three judges to give their nod to the former. With the victory, Camacho improved his win-loss record to 12-2, while Nakamura dropped to a 27-6 slate.

The 24-year-old Camacho, in an email to *Saipan Tribune*, said his strategy against Na-

kamura was really to bring the fight out of the floor, as the Japanese has a good reputation in wrestling, grappling, and jiu jitsu. The 29-year-old fighter, according to Trench Tech's Cuki Alvarez, who watched the Nakamura-Camacho tussle, submits most of his opponents to rear-naked choke.

However, Camacho was surprised to see Nakamura exchanging jobs with him in the

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Veteran pair delivers in Sun Palace tourney

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The veteran tandem of Sam Jones and Glenn Bluitjens outclassed the youthful duo of Jordan Pangilinan and Ezekiel Macario in last Friday's men's doubles A game in the Sun Palace Hotel Singles and Doubles Badminton Competition 2014 at the TSL Sports Complex.

The two Saipan Badminton Club members swept Community Badminton Club's Pangilinan and Macario, but sweated it out in all two games, pulling off a 21-18 in the opener and eking out a 21-

17 triumph in the second.

Nine other pairs joined Jones and Bluitjens in the win column last Friday.

In the men's doubles B, it was the turn of youth players Deether Edralin and J.P. Nopia to prevail against Jojo Savellano and Narlou Achas.

The Community Badminton Club pair bagged a 21-18 win in the first game and had a tougher time in the second, eking out a 21-20 victory. Achas and Savellano played twice last Friday and also lost to Aries Cordero and Chris Hilario, who needed only two games to beat their foes, 21-

See VETERAN on Page 26

Enforcers, Comets in midst of 13-inning standoff



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Comets coach watches his pitcher warm up before their game against the JPO Enforcers in the first round of their Junior League game last January at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Enforcers and the Comets duelled in the longest game so far in the 2014 Saipan Little League Baseball after playing 13 innings last Saturday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

There could be more to come, as the Junior League match is not over yet with the division-leading Enforcers (7-0) and the Comets (4-3) still in a deadlock, 6-all, when they decided to call it a day after staying in the field for nearly five hours.

Comets catcher Austin Hocog forced the deadlock when he scored at the bottom of the 12th inning off a wild pitch from Ethan Babauta. The Comets had

a chance to take the lead with Kobe Santos on second with two outs and Rejay Iskawa batting next, however the former went down on a 5-3 putout play.

The Enforcers then had the opportunity to regain the upper hand and put pressure on the Comets at the top of the 13th when it loaded the bases with two outs. However, Franco Masga made a big defensive stop, picking up a line drive from Nathan Logis. After missing a shot at the lead, the Enforcers made up for it by bringing down the Comets' first three batters.

The Enforcers and the Comets completed 13 innings at nearly 8pm and both camps agreed to continue the game later, as players were already

See ENFORCERS on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Glenn Bluitjens misses a shot, but Sam Jones is there for a return from the backline during their men's doubles A game against Chris Hilario and Jerry Hibi in the Sun Palace tournament last Saturday at the TSL Sports Complex.